



# HIGH COUNTRY

COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

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C77 High country.

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YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

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# HIGH COUNTRY

THE ROCKIES YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

**By Courtney Ryley Cooper**

THE CROSS-CUT

THE WHITE DESERT

UNDER THE BIG TOP

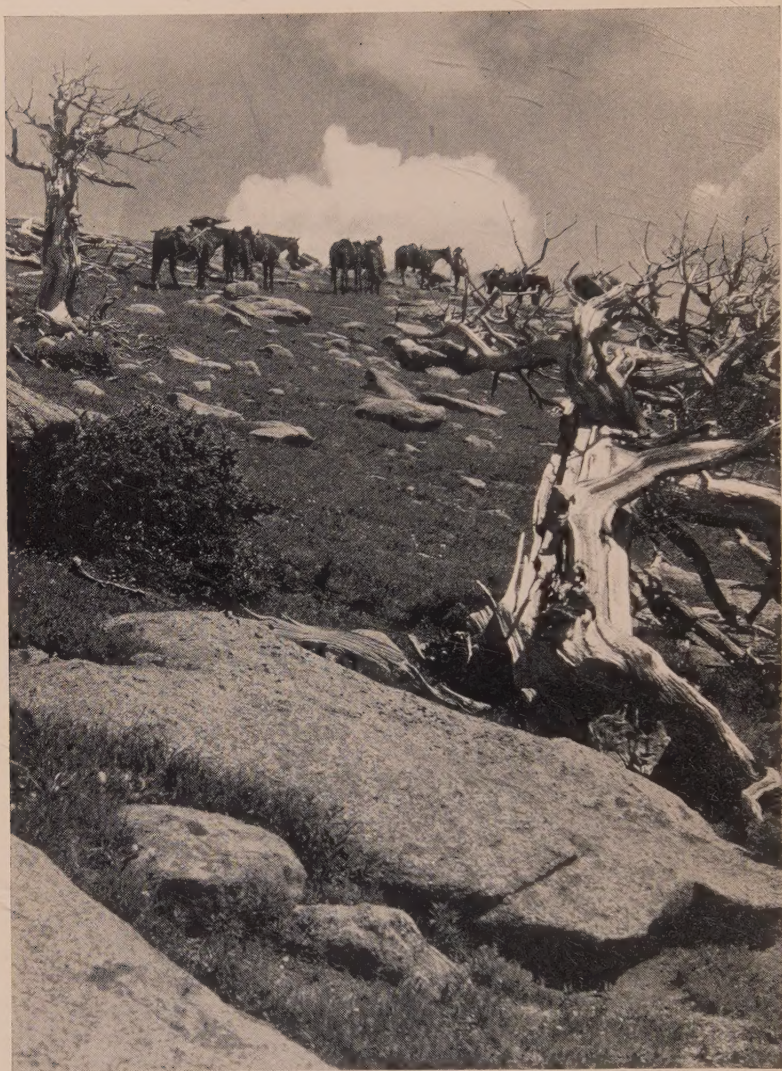
THE LAST FRONTIER

LIONS 'N' TIGERS 'N' EVERYTHING

HIGH COUNTRY



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*Denver Tourist Bureau*

PETRIFIED LIFE

# HIGH COUNTRY

THE ROCKIES  
YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

—

by COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

Santa Clara County

Free Library

Santa Clara, Calif.



ILLUSTRATED

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

Boston

1926

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To

GEORGE HORACE LORIMER

104208



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# HIGH COUNTRY

THE ROCKIES YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY



## CHAPTER I

### HIGH COUNTRY

THE Rainbows had stopped biting. Over Scraggly Knob, with its dust-caked, rock-imbedded glacier, its tremendous clefts, its shadowy caverns and tumbled rockslides, the clouds were massing for their usual afternoon onslaught of the late summer, a thing of stinging sleet and mushy snow, of rain, colder than either, seething on the turbulent breast of a howling gale. It was a time for speed — the lake which had been so inviting in the morning had lost its lure. A cold storm on the top of the Rockies is not a thing to dally with, and I locked the rough-hewn door of my little log cabin with more of haste than usual, shifted my pack to a more comfortable position and dodged from rock to rock, and from one dead-fall float to another as I took a shortcut across the lower end of the lake that I might strike the down trail a moment sooner. At last I reached it, and there halted. The caretaker of the lake, employed by those of us who believe in owning our fishing rather than in going forth to hunt it in these precarious days of sport, had called to me and was moving nearer.

“You’re on the down trail?” he asked.

“Yep.”

“Comin’ back?” There was a certain tone of pathos in his voice which almost made me forget the growling storm.

“Yes, toward the end of the week.”

He hesitated, a man with baggy trousers stuffed into water-proofed boots, leather, sheep-lined jacket, knuckles protruding from lean hands, skin which had been tanned until it no longer was brown, but which seemed to have a sort of consistency, as though the color might have gone through. A man of the hills was he — he'd spent his time in the mines, on ragged trails with a packjack, looking for the new bonanza that would build another Cripple Creek; months in the snow, years on sowbelly and beans; a man of the hills and, as the novelists say, of the silent places. Yet there was that air of pathos in his gray, searching eyes; eyes which demanded, it seemed, that I make a promise even before he asked it.

"You're comin' back?" he repeated. "Will you do something for me? Will you bring me a dog? I — can't stand it up here much longer if I don't have a dog or somethin'. They brought them sheep through last week an' th' coyotes 've been howling. Them an' th' cooneys, screechin' an' carryin' on in th' evenin's." He raised a hand. "See that drift over there?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm gettin' so I'm watchin' it. Hopin' she'll close her mouth. 'Tain't right to do them things."

I glanced toward the snowdrift, a thing of smudgy white, plastered against the vicious breast of Scraggly Knob, and saw what he meant. It resembled a woman, holding forth her arms in pleading, and her mouth agape, as with an irrepressible sob.

"I'll bring you a dog, Pete," I said. "And I'll come back a day early."

For caretakers are hard to get in the High Country, and when High Country is mentioned, it doesn't mean mere mountains. It means the things that the tourist sees

but rarely touches — and practically never experiences — the professional ranges of the Rockies, the backbone of the continent, where life is different and difficult.

The popular conception of mountains is that they are like circuses — see one and you see all. And just like the idea about circuses, the belief about mountains is thoroughly wrong. I live in the hills. I tramp them and sleep in them and love them and study them, and it is seldom that I find even two mountains alike, much less two ranges.

The Rockies do not merely bound up from the plains, achieve an elevation and then slide into the level country again on the other side of the Continental Divide. They've a lot of diversity to go through with first, the piling of one range upon another, until the one you've just crossed appears to be little more than a string of molehills, while the one waiting in the distance has far more to it than could be imagined — enough, in fact, to dwarf the range you're crossing, until at last you reach the ultimate. And there, where the ragged streaks of the Rockies scrape against the sky, where the snow lingers all summer long and where the flowers flourish with almost tropical luxuriance to the very line where the elements will no longer permit life — there is the High Country, in an elevation which may be encompassed in perhaps a thousand feet, where man may exist, with fuel and shelter, while perhaps only a hundred feet above him runs the creeping line of juniper and scraggly willows, merging into the sparkling granite and dusty snow where nothing may survive for more than a temporary visitation. It is that stretch of country for a thousand feet below timber line where wooded life in all its forms makes its last stand, which constitutes the High Country of the Rocky Moun-

tains — and it is in this thousand feet that some of the queerest stories of the hills have been written, in loneliness, in despair, in strange adventure and in woodcraft. It is America's final frontier. What's more, it hasn't been conquered — for there is little of gain for conquest, and who would suffer for anything except money, unless it be a fool fisherman looking for new gems of blue in which to dampen his flies?

There was a time when many persons knew the High Country. That was in other days, when almost any prospector could be grubstaked at the town store, and sent forth with his rifle, his pick and his pan to find a new bonanza. All through the Rockies, above and below timber line, there still remain the monuments to these people, these wanderers, grubbing like gophers in the granite and quartz for the vein they were sure would reveal itself a few feet farther on; monuments carved decades ago, yet seemingly as fresh to-day as when they were made — for in the high hills scars have a habit of not healing. Fidgety with anticipation, a fishing friend and myself made a trip one summer in to a lake which we were sure had not been touched by a fly or by bait for two years. Once upon a time there had been a logging camp in the vicinity, but owing to the death of the owner several years before, it had been closed, to remain deserted until the winds and hard-packed drifts of winter and the dry-rotting suns of summer should dispose of its loneliness. Since then, the country had been deserted; the fish of the lake into which logs once had boomed from the ridge above had not been disturbed, and we were first in.

At least, we thought we were, until my friend suddenly halted, and with disappointed eyes looked gloomily at the rocky road.



THE LOG CABIN IS BECOMING A THING  
OF THE PAST



THE HIGH COUNTRY IS A PLACE OF  
BROODING MYSTERIES



"There's been a wagon up here!" he said.

I came beside him and stared downward. It was true! There in the mixed pebbles and rocks and sand and loam of the straggling logroad were the prints of tires, deep cut, and apparently not more than a few weeks old.

"Looks like they were made just before we had that big rain," said my companion, and I agreed. Two hundred feet farther on, however, we changed our minds. Across the trail lay a drift which had been consistently shoveled out each spring before the desertion of the lumber camp, but which had remained unmolested since the saws had ceased to whine and the logs come screaming down the runways and on to the mill. At the sides showed two black lines, each marking the level where the dust and settlings of erosion had gathered throughout the summer, only to be covered anew when the winter came rushing on, almost before the summer had gained its full assertion. They spoke of three years of lonely desertion in which the road had not been touched by team or vehicle, and into the bottom of this drift ran those wagon tracks which we had believed to be only weeks old.

The reason? Simply because the things which live in the High Country exist in soil which has come of the slowest erosion; three inches deep perhaps, and yet the result of the efforts of thousands of years upon granite and igneous stone that is even harder. Grass does not grow in a few weeks — the same bunches appear year after year, the same flowers bloom in the same spots, and the same patches of earth remain bare. Tear up a columbine by its roots and no new plant takes its place; merely a hole in the earth which remains there from one season to another. For that reason, the mountaineer rarely picks flowers. It seems unsportsmanlike. After some tender thing of

Nature has struggled for nine months of the year to sustain the germ of life, it seems to the fellow who treads the high hills that it deserves at least a bit of a chance to enjoy the fruits of its labors and bloom unmolested, until the snows shall bury it again.

A lonely country, aloof, barren, majestic, and yet sullen; mysterious, forbidding, yet beckoning, hard to reach — and mainly unvisited, for the explorer of to-day likes to do his work from the soft seat of an automobile and not from the hurricane deck of a mountain horse, or by means of slow plodding and hard puffing with a pack upon his back. In the mountain parks and certain resorts, of course, there are favorite mountains which are climbed enthusiastically and regularly, with guides to point out which is the female flower and which the male, with well-worn trails, and story-book lectures upon the flowers and fauna — peaks which reach well into the sky; but to the seasoned mountaineer this is a great deal like going to the museum to look at the skeleton of the dinosaur. It's too well mounted and too complete as to bones, to be very real. If the party slept overnight with a pack for a pillow and a clump of creeping juniper for a blanket it might be more interesting. But there's always the hotel waiting at the foot of the trail; the guide knows when to start down again, and the number of persons who take anything except the beaten paths is surprisingly small. In Denver, for instance, there is a population of about three hundred thousand, and Denver is practically at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. I doubt if more than one person in five hundred has actually been in the really high country. My little town is far enough up in the hills to possess barber shops which still hold dear those ancient individual shaving mugs with gold borders and the names of their

owners done in old English. Even here the number is comparatively few.

The backbone ranges of the Rocky Mountains are something not to be gone into without a purpose. The roads are few, and when they do occur, they are only rocky, steep stretches to be negotiated by foot, or horseback or by four-horse team. More often the way is only a trail, made in the distant past by some prospector and his pack train, and lasting unmolested, except by deadfalls and seepage from the snowdrifts, throughout the years. A country which towers above the mountains about it, bare and gaunt and grim, like a surly giant above dwarfs, to be invaded only by fishermen in search of the lakes which glisten in every saucer of the mountains, by forest rangers, by governmental hunters of predatory animals, and others of their ilk; a country which is a thing of opposites, of fears, not of the physical, but of something far more overpowering — the supernatural!

One hears voices when one is alone in the High Country, whispering voices; of some one moaning; or men talking, not fifty feet away. But it is only the shivering of a half-foliaged pine, its trunk twisted and knotted and lunched with pitch, its branches extended from the almost constant wind, as though in pleading. Or the murmurings of a trickling stream, bubbling down to a lake from a concealed snow patch, far above. One steps hurriedly aside at the whirring of a rattlesnake, when he knows full well that it is only a green-headed grasshopper, trying its wings. Or halts at the scampering sound of a chipmunk — simply because it has been a sudden noise. For this is silent country, lonely country, where at night one sees meteors flashing across the sky, never visible to those in the lower altitudes, the ball white-hot, the sparks trailing

in a comet-like tail and so low that it seems that the dust must settle on one's shoulders. Where the sun does not grow red with its sinking, but remains white-yellow to the very edge of the hills, hovers there for an instant, then drops — and it is night. Where the wind moans and ceases, then blusters and roars, to sink into strange whinings and screechings, as of a soul in torment, while the half-bare trees groan their agony, and afar off a rock, loosened at the top of an enormous slide, starts downward with jolts and scrapings, gains the company of dislodged pebbles, stones and boulders, and like the snowball, growing in strength every moment, tears downward, to splash into a lake — and then, with the sudden dying of the wind, comes silence again. Silence until it seems that one can hear the stars twinkle, until one talks to oneself simply because everything is so silent — then hushes as a coyote, miles away, strikes a scent, signals to his pack, and with his eerie companions screeching in return, goes onward. And silence again — and things all about — things which are nothing. Things which haunt and follow and retreat and die, which assume strange shapes that become only trees when one approaches, things which are only loneliness and the imaginings of a brooding, majestic, beautiful country. And those who know it, love it in spite of all of that. But they don't like to stay in it alone, once the sun begins to sink. For then there are shadows. The drifts assume shapes surprisingly human, plastered as they are in a perspective which seems only a short distance away but which, owing to the clarity of the atmosphere, may be miles. An innocent stone across the gorge, shapeless in the daytime, becomes a horrible gargoyle, to grimace and mock until the shadows block it out. The willows, fighting upward along the seepage waste

below a glacier, become a herd of elk grazing, and one finds himself wondering why they never move. Creepy country, like the sea. One never seems to know.

Nor is this merely a personal reaction. It seems to be the same with every one who knows the land. Once upon a time, I stood at timber line with George Kent Shuler, formerly state treasurer of New York. "Mike" as he is known, has been a bit of an adventurer most of his life. He was one of the first to drive a motor car across Death Valley. He was at Vera Cruz, with the Marines. He fought "spicks" in the tropics. He was a Major of Marines in France and got plastered with medals for what he did there, including the Legion of Honor. And as the sun sank, I asked him:

"Mike, how do you think this country would strike you at night?"

"Don't have to think," came the reply. "I know. Had a touch of it one time out in Nevada. They had me staked out at a silver claim there — six miles from town. Well, I stayed three nights. After that, I walked six miles to work in the morning and six miles back to town at night. That country had gotten me to talking to myself!"

Yet, we both agreed, as we viewed the matter, that there wasn't a thing of which to be afraid. The mountaineer needs to know but few rules. He needs no weapon, unless it be a small rifle for equally small game, or a hunting knife which is more of utility than anything else. Time was when a hunting knife was a thing of defense or for skinning game. Now it is a combination pocket-knife, can opener, wood shaver, pitch cutter for the starting of a fire, bread knife and whatnot. There is nothing in an outdoor man's kit more practical or more useful. But the old days in which the hunting knife filled in as a

life-saver after your last shot was exhausted and the grizzly kept coming on are gone. There is always dry wood for a fire in the deadfalls which abound everywhere — for trees struggle only so long at timber line, then die and tumble in the high winds which sweep, winter and summer, over the barren land. There is always pitch, bubbling from the trunks of living trees, which can either be picked off with the fingers or scraped off with a knife, and which will start a fire quicker than any paper ever manufactured. And, if caught shelterless, it is possible to crawl under the heavy fronds of creeping juniper, or low-slung branches of bent pines, and there sleep — at least fitfully — with the certain knowledge that no wild beast is to attack one. Or if lost, to find the first stream and follow it downward and not go gallivanting from hill to hill with the hope of discovering some habitation haphazard. Or if befuddled by a sudden realization of trouble, merely to sit down for a moment, pick up a handful of grass and run the blades, one by one, through one's fingers, by which time the brain is cleared and sensible thinking permitted. Or if on the upgrade, to remember that altitude is a hard master, that the lungs are working overtime, and that a slow pace is faster than a quick one — because the minutes pass rapidly when one sits down to rest. Or that camphor ice or a white lipstick, rubbed on the lips at the beginning of a hike will prevent them from cracking or blistering from the sweep of wind or intense heat of fast-working breath. Or that the smaller the pack, the lighter the burden, and that a half hour of planning beforehand, with a view to what is to be eaten at each meal, does not consume as much time as a half-dozen rest stops because of a carelessly arranged burden. These and little else are the rules of the hills; granting, of course,

that one knows that the temperature drops with practically every foot of rise in altitude, that night at eleven thousand feet is fully twenty degrees colder than at even five thousand; that there is always the danger of storm, or of high, piercing wind, and that preparations should be made for it. But these are all merely natural rules — there is nothing in them that has to do with the fear which seems to invade one without one's knowing why, especially when night comes in the High Country.

It's the solitude, the loneliness. The aloofness of the hills as though they were backing away from you, resenting your interference. The white of the snowdrifts. Because of these the High Country breeds a strange people, and to those who know the land, a meeting with a person touched with insanity is little to comment upon. It is merely a loneliness complex. And the very loneliness has given a surcease. For he has become happy through the very thing which has taken happiness from him. To a normal person, he's insane. To himself, he's merely gained that thing which one craves so much when one strikes the barrenness of altitude — he's found company.

Company! Nor is it entirely a human trait. I have a giant police dog, afraid of nothing, it seems. In fact, I also have a smaller dog, a sort of a roughneck canine general, which when he sallies forth to look the town over, takes his big pal along to do his fighting when the opposition becomes too great. This dog, in town, doesn't seem to care much whether I am afoot or horseback, regarding me with a sort of dog disdain as he busies himself with the multitudinous affairs of a canine existence. But when we go into the high hills, and the wind begins to whistle through the chinkings of my little log cabin, when the night birds begin to sing — and it seems natural that

in this country there should be a bird which cries plaintively all night long — when the coyotes howl over the ridge, old Rex lumbers to my side, and licks my hands, and snuggles against my legs. For he is lonely too.

Company! And the lack of it breeds insanity. There are still in these mountains men who came here years ago, men seeking gold, and who perhaps have found enough of it to furnish them at least a living from year to year. But to gain that livelihood, they must remain there short summer and long, bleak winter — and the result is disastrous. Nor is it much better if there is another to share the months.

“See that cabin up there,” said an old prospector on Strawberry Flats one day as we talked of this particular phase of things, and he pointed upward to a leaning, roofless log structure, high above. “Fellow went in there about twenty years ago. Thought he’d beat the loneliness and took another man in with him. Hard winter that year. Along about February he came down — on home-made snowshoes. Gave himself up. Killed the other man — couldn’t stand him any longer. Just too much of each other. Know how it is. Had to stay six months over by Craig with a fellow once. Snowed in. By the time we got out o’ there, he’d read the Bible eight times an’ I’d pretty near memorized a whole mail order catalogue just to keep from talking to each other. Nope, you can’t do without company and you can’t do with it. Funny that way, these hills, when they snow you in.”

The result is that for the hillbilly, alone in the high fastnesses, there almost invariably comes the time when he is granted an imaginary company. Time passes and he begins to talk to himself. More time goes by, and he finds himself humanizing a chair, or a table, or the stove, or his

dog, or a picture. I knew a man who talked by the hour to a picture of a girl on a four-year-old calendar, and buried with genuine sorrow the untouched half of her when one day she fell on the stove and was semi-incinerated!

It's a loneliness insanity, harmless, different from any other sort of insanity that one could experience. A breaking of the mind, simply through the strange, supernatural air which seems to pervade everything and which at last attunes the human brain to a like condition. An insanity in which the world becomes peopled with only those that one desires about one, and a very happy sort of a derangement, it would seem. A pathetic insanity to normal folks, rather than a thing of which to be afraid; it is not at all unusual to see some grizzled man treading a high mountain trail, talking and arguing at the top of his voice, swinging his arms or smacking his fists in gigantic gestures — the only trouble being that he is talking to himself! One evening at sundown, Joe Mills, brother of the late Enos Mills, the naturalist, was making a trip through the high hills, sleeping where dusk found him, and on this occasion had discovered an ancient, discarded wagon, under which he had crawled for shelter. Evidently other mountaineers had used the same haven, for cans were strewn about, reminders of past meals, and the ground was smooth from blanketing. Joe reclined — only to half rise in a listening attitude.

"An' I'm tellin' you jest this," came a voice. "I'm tellin' you thet it ain't in that ledge at all. What we've got 't do is crosscut through thet footwall, then drift on th' vein an' right there's where we'll find ore an' plenty of it too —"

Then silence. Joe awaited an answering voice, but none

came. He looked out beneath the wagon, saw a pair of legs, looked higher and discovered one man, who had halted there, apparently listening, as though to an argument. Then he exploded again, fist banging into open palm, asserting anew where the riches of his mine were sure to be found. It was a prospector, talking to an imaginary companion which loneliness had given. Joe grinned, reached quietly backward, found an empty tin can, and threw it into the air, so that it alighted practically at the prospector's feet. Immediately the argument halted. The grizzled veteran poked the can with his feet, backed away a few feet, regarded it again, then turned to his imaginary companion.

"Funny about thet can, wasn't it?" he asked. "Humph! Funny about thet can. Jest reminded me. Remember thet time we was prospectin' along Chicago Creek an' we had to live on thet same brand o' beans for six months? Tough winter, thet! I rec'clet thet you wanted t' follow up thet piece o' float thet we found at th' foot o' Devil's Canon, an' th' more I think about it, th' more I figger we might 've done better if we'd follered your advice."

Then, without more ado, he returned to his original argument, and walked on. Empty tin cans, dropping from the sky, were nothing in his life. He had more important matters, like mines full of gold — and ghosts.

But one by one the old-timers are passing. And with them is passing a thing that is little short of an art — a knowledge which began with the founding of this country, grew, prospered, and then faded. I refer to the art of building that typically American edifice, the log cabin.

You'll find them dotting the high hills, the only struc-

tures possible, for the roads will permit little else, and as consistently falling to pieces, with now and then a columbine growing out of what is left of the sod roof, the chinking gone from between the black logs, and a snowdrift still seeping water from a corner where it has packed itself within during the long months of winter. For spring does not come in the high mountains until mid-June, summer does not arrive until July; there is no autumn and winter blusters back again in September. You'll find these rotting places everywhere, but seldom indeed will you find a new log cabin. The art is dying; year by year those who know how to splice the logs, how to gauge by a glance which tree will form a good mainstay for the heavy walls and which will not; how to raise, alone, logs many times a man's weight to the very top of a structure to form the eaves and ridgepole — this knowledge is nearly gone. I wanted another room added to a cabin at timber line. It took weeks to find the man who could build it. And when he finished his task, lonely, eager for lights and comforts again, he scrawled upon the freshly hewn logs:

T. B. Puderbaugh built this cabin  
in this Godforsaken place,  
and he won't build any more.

And that cabin is the only one to my knowledge that shows new logs in a radius of twenty miles! The others are falling apart, with the flowers growing unnoticed in the sod which formed their roof.

Unnoticed for two reasons; first because few persons pass them any more, secondly because the true mountaineer is not much of an expert on flowers. The professional summer resort guide can tell you the name of every bloom which crowds the snowdrifts in the summer time; he'll

even go so far as to tell you which is the boy flower and which the girl. But ask the mountaineer the name of that little blue bloom growing over beside those rotten logs and he'll inevitably reply:

"I dunno. Just some little blue flower, I guess."

True, he knows the columbine and the wild rose and the Indian Paint Brush, or Bloody Nose as he calls it, and the fragile white of the strawberry which blossoms bravely but rarely bears, even to the last strip where the wind-beaten pine struggles against wind and snow and altitude, but these are only four out of scores of varieties which flourish in every seepage-softened spot when the drifts go out. His mind simply doesn't seem to run to flowers; they're pretty and all that and he likes to sweep them with a glance, but he goes no closer. He rarely picks them, simply because he sympathizes with them; and perhaps too because he sympathizes he lets them alone in their every respect. But ask him what that rock is just ahead, and he'll tell you at a glance whether or not it's ore bearing.

In fact, there is a different sort of woodcraft in the High Country from that which exists in the lower altitudes. The mountaineer may know how to guide himself by the North Star, but he doesn't depend upon it, because, if the day has happened to have been warm in the lower attitude, the scraggly mountain tops may be screened in fog that hides every star. He looks for no moss on the sides of trees, because the country is too dry for that sort of thing. Nor does he follow the hundred and one other things that have existed so patently since the days of "The Last of the Mohicans." He has his own particular little ways, and he uses them.

The other day, Jack Nankervis passed the house and sat

on the porch to chat. Jack knows the hills — he's lived in them, almost eaten them. And I asked him a question.

"Jack," I said, "suppose you should be lost in the mountains with fog everywhere, and night coming on, could you get out? That is, of course, providing that you knew the direction you wanted to go?"

Jack grinned.

"I know what you're driving at," he said. "These people that get lost and keep walking in a circle all the time. Well, they do it, don't they? Yep," he mused, "they all do it. Seems just human nature to start walking in a circle when you get lost. Now, let's see if I get that straight," and he repeated the question, then rested his knee in his cupped hands. "Well, I guess I'd do just about the same thing that I did when I got caught that way once.

"Jim Kent — think that was his name — and I were hunting deer over on Bear Mountain. Had plenty of time to get to Mill Creek and follow it down before night came on, but we hadn't counted on fog. Know how it rolls up in the High Country — you look up and think somebody's set the mountain on fire and that the smoke's coming straight at you, then you realize that it's fog rolling up. Well, that's the way it came at us. Had us caught before we could say Jack Robinson. And the first thing we knew, I stopped.

" 'Jim,' I said, 'we're going in a circle.'

" 'No,' says he. Then he gets down on the ground and crawls around on his hands and knees and then straightens up, sort of pasty-faced. 'Jack,' he says, 'you're right. You're right,' he says. 'I found our tracks not twenty feet away.'

"Well, that didn't look any too good, especially with

night coming on, so Jim and I just looked at each other for a minute. Then I says, 'Jim,' I says, 'let's sit down.' So we sat. After awhile, I said to Jim: 'Jim,' I says, 'the cardinal rule about finding your way out of the hills in this part of the country is to strike a stream and follow it on down, because sooner or later you're going to run into a house, simply because people have to have water and so they build their houses close to streams. That's right, ain't it? '

"Well, that sort of made Jim mad and he asked me if I thought he didn't know anything about mountains. But I stopped him.

" 'Just hold your hosses now,' I says, 'We want to find Mill Creek, don't we? Well, it's a cinch, we're still on Bear Mountain, since we've been walking in a circle. Now, which direction is Mill Creek from Bear Mountain? East, ain't it? '

" 'Of course it's east,' he says.

" 'Then just wait a minute,' I answers and gets up. A minute later, I says, 'Come on, Jim! ' And a half hour more we were on Mill Creek!

"You see," he continued with a grin, "there's another rule about our part of the High Country. That is that the wind, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, on this side of the range anyway, blows from the west. Well, if the wind blows from the west, it'll push things east, won't it? Of course it will. So you'll always find the branches of the trees pointing pretty near due east, and you'll find the roots of the deadfalls showing to the west, because when they've fallen, the wind's pushed the tops of 'em in the other direction. So if you've got east and west, what more do you want? But you see, even Jim and I, seasoned as we were, had forgotten that, simply because we'd gotten

panicky. Might 've still been walking in that circle if we hadn't sat down to think! "

Which, however, is a thing seldom done by the inexperienced person lost in the hills. The first impulse is to rush on — to hurry before night comes, or to keep going ere possible rescuers give up their search. And there are only mountains, more mountains and more mountains, once one is crossed. The High Country is like the sea; immutable, mysterious, grudging of invasion; treacherous, petulant, yet calmly lovable and alluring, carrying one on and on, to enjoyment or oblivion as the case may be.

Simply because, as Jack Nankervis has said, the High Country has the drop on its victim, just as the sea has the advantage over the sailor who falls from his ship. There is the power of it, the overtowering strength of the giant cliffs, the knowledge that in crossing a tremendous drift the added weight of a human being may cause that mass of snow to go plunging downward; for in the spring, especially, when all the mountains are shrouded in white, there is little way to tell which is a "slide" drift — or one that becomes an avalanche after a certain time of melting — and which is a permanent one, lying in a cup of the hills and, like the glacier of which it forms a miniature counterpart, moving slowly downward inch by inch and year by year. There is the insensate fear that this is the time when the High Country will beat you, and once that impression becomes fastened in a human brain, the mountains usually come forth a victor. And in that very fact lies a great part of their fascination!

## CHAPTER II

### SLOW—SOUND HORN!

THE doctor of a little Rocky Mountain town asked me to write this chapter as a favor to him and to other doctors who live in the hills and who, in the love of Nature, dislike to see the landscape muddled up with the wrecks of humans and automobiles, to say nothing of what it may do for those humans themselves who start out on a vacation with a glorious prospect — and sometimes end in a hospital.

“It’s not that I object to the work,” he said, “even though it is a bit trying to hurry thirty miles or so up into the higher hills and try to load some one with a broken hip into an automobile and bring him to town, only to find that the fracture is such that it requires an X-ray before setting, thus necessitating a further trip of forty miles to a city and its well-equipped hospitals. It’s just that there’s no sense in it — and any doctor who’s really a true member of his profession believes far more in prevention than in cure.”

Hence this little effusion on how to avoid being killed while motoring in the mountains.

There is a difference between mountains and what pass as them, but what are, by comparison, merely hills. The Catskills, the Alleghanies, the Blue Ridges and the Cumberlands belong to the latter class. The Rockies are mountains in the professional sense of the word; and it is of these mountains that the motor vacationist often

dreams, coupling that vision with a mental bet that his "old cart" can take anything they've got on high.

Nor is that assurance purely a thing of motor-car pride or of egotism. Most of us live in cities, where the streets have been carefully graded to admit of the smallest amount of resistance to the work of a vehicle. The municipality that possesses a hill of more than six per cent. is unusual, and it is in rare cases that such a grade is greater in extent than a block or two. Somewhere outside of town there exists, perhaps, an acclivity that may run as high as ten per cent., and that is two or three hundred feet in length, to which the motor-car salesman takes the prospective buyer for a test of the machine. Up goes the car on second or low, as the case may be, without an evidence of strain, and certainly without any unfavorable results upon the cooling system. To a person accustomed to flat country the hill appears to be perpendicular — almost an impossibility for anything to climb — with the result that when the car goes up it easily and as though longing for more, the inevitable pride of a car owner causes the announcement: "Well! If the old boat can make that it can make anything that even looks like a road!"

It is with the armament of this information that he goes to the mountains, encounters difficulties, trials, troubles, tribulations, broken-down motors and often serious accidents, and comes out of it all no wiser than he was before.

"Must have been something wrong with the old bus," is his alibi. "It never acted like that before."

All for the reason that it never before had been in mountains! There's a difference. The hill which seems straight up in a flat country is only a medium grade or fairly level country when one bucks up against the pro-

fessional grades of the various roads the vacationist must travel in the Rocky Mountains. Any car in the world can make a ten per cent. pull for a distance of a few hundred feet. But what happens when that grade extends for miles? Fifteen miles out of Denver, Colorado, one can climb a mountain range, and then, at the top, really be at only the beginning of the mountains. There are two more ranges piled on top of this before the crest of the continent is reached!

Consequently, once a person really gets into the mountains all sense of perspective seems to be lost. Grades appear to be only flat stretches, while the heavier pulls farther on seem to be only slight rises of one or two per cent. which should be taken easily with the motor breezing along on high. But for some strange reason the machine coughs and gasps and slows down. The inexperienced driver begins to fight his engine, releasing the clutch, allowing the engine to race, then throwing in the clutch again, for a spurt. But still the gasping comes, accompanied by anger directed toward the carburetor. Again and again is it tried — and then something goes wrong with the cooling system. The darned thing's boiling! First time it ever did such a thing in its life. Ever see it fail, something always goes wrong with a car when you're a long way from a garage? Of course the driving hasn't had a thing to do with it!

Nothing at all — only this much: I have driven many, many thousand miles of mountain roads in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. I have an ordinarily good car, neither cheap nor high-priced. With that automobile I can climb one grade of six miles in which the lift starts at eight per cent. and finishes with a grand finale of thirty-two per cent., experiencing neither

an appreciable strain on my motor nor any trouble with the cooling system. The nearest my car ever came to boiling was when I towed a disabled machine up a part of that terrific grade!

There is another grade, which extends for fourteen miles, on which the "level" stretches run a minimum of five per cent., and the heaviest grade is eighteen, meaning a steady pull of more than ten miles in second and low. I have never had radiator, oil or engine trouble on that hill. Yet one day I lent my car to a man unaccustomed to mountain driving, and that car of mine, which had sailed "over the hump" with hardly a realization of the difficulty, boiled eight times in those fourteen miles! The hand at the wheel has a great deal to do with the work of the engine. More, because the hand at the wheel isn't a practiced one, and because the brain behind that hand at the wheel has either refused to understand the difficulties of mountain driving or has been kept in ignorance of them, there are at least ten accidents a week during the summer months in the driving regions of the Rocky Mountains, and on the various passes leading over the Continental Divide. What may seem strange to the uninitiated, and not at all strange to those who know the hills, is the fact that most of these accidents happen when the car is either stopped or going downhill!

Naturally there is a logical explanation. The usual man, when he stops on a hill in town or in the country, sets his emergency brake; and then, if this does not hold tightly enough, reënforces this by throwing the car into low gear or reverse, thus making the engine accomplish what the brake bands do not. On the ordinary grade, when the time comes to start again, the pull of the hill is so slight that if the emergency allows movement at all it is so slow as

to be almost imperceptible. But on a heavy mountain grade conditions are different. One can't throw the car out of gear and then step on the starter, trusting the brakes to hold until the engine starts. The pull of gravity is so strong that the minute the extra bindage is released the car starts downhill, and with speed! The result is that the driver, frightened by the strange actions of his car, loses his head for an instant — and that instant is sufficient. Mountain roads are narrow. They also are crooked. Upon the usual pass road a fifty-foot progress or regress in a straight line inevitably brings a car either to the edge of a precipice or into the stone wall of the mountain itself. There's a crash either way.

Yet it all is easily avoided — second nature, in fact, to mountaineers. The man who drives mountain roads merely turns off the ignition, and allows his car to stop in gear, at the extreme edge of the road if he is alone, or at any place he cares to if he is accompanied. Then the first action upon leaving the car is to place a good-sized chuck rock under a hind wheel. After which he can even release the brakes if he cares to — the rock does the braking for him. When he starts, if alone, he has come from a far side of the road, where the chuck rock will not bother the next motorist, because it is off the road. If he is accompanied his companion stands at the rear of the car and throws the chuck from the highway, and then catches up with the slow-moving machine and hops in. Very simple to the mountain driver. A bit inconvenient, perhaps, to the man accustomed to the cities or to the smooth white roads of the East — but there's exactly the point. Mountain roads are neither boulevards nor pretty, gleaming turnpikes. They're something to travel on to get somewhere, and the sooner the prospective driver realizes it,

the better. Likewise, mountain driving is as different from city or turnpike driving as automobile driving is different from the progress of Old Dobbin and the one-hoss shay. There are certain things to know — which must be known — just as you must know how to throw in the clutch and put your foot on the gas before you can expect a machine to move. Yet the strange part of it all is — once the few necessary things are learned about mountain driving — it's the easiest driving of all!

In the city you look for the signal of the traffic patrolman, watch the man ahead of you, and keep an eye open for what may come upon you from the intersecting streets. That makes three things for the eye to watch. In the mountains there is only one — and that's the road. But, it must be stated, that road is a jealous thing, and one which requires constant attention. You don't just give it a glance now and then; you watch it! It is a proposition where you are using both eyes all the time, and with both those eyes fastened upon the brown twisting ribbon before you. For a time it seems difficult. Also, for a time, it appears that you are doomed to miss the very scenery you have come to see. But as the miles go on, you find that in some instinctive way your vision has broadened; it becomes second nature to watch every foot of that road, yet see everything about you at the same time. In fact, the usual procedure of country driving is merely reversed. You see the scenery in swifter glances, and the road in longer stretches of watching. Besides, there is no law against your stopping every now and then, getting out of the car, and really seeing what you've come to look at, instead of watching it as through a railroad car window.

In the city one travels at a certain rate of speed because of the laws which govern that speed, and because of the

motorcycle cop who is ever ready to signal one down and give you a red or blue admission ticket to the speeder's court. In the mountains there is a speed cop who travels unseen, but who is at one's elbow, nevertheless, whenever the desire seizes one to forget caution or to "step on it." He's very influential. His name is Death.

Again let it be explained that mountain roads are not boulevards. Of course it is perfectly true that there are certain stretches of road that deserve this name, such as that masterpiece of mountain-highway engineering which runs from Golden, Colorado, up the six-mile stretch of Lookout Mountain to Buffalo Bill's grave, thence on to Bergen Park, to Morrison and back to Denver, a park road under the management of the city of Denver, perfectly aligned, with every curve marked, every grade broadened, every drain in place, and every possible thing done to make it a highway fully deserving of the name. Likewise is the Big Thompson Cañon road leading into Estes Park, the road connecting Trinidad, Colorado, and Raton, New Mexico, the high-line drive to Cañon City, the new government project to Mount Evans, and various highways over the Continental Divide. But after all, though these roads run through mountains, they are not, in the strict acceptance of the term, mountain roads.

The real mountain highway is a graduation from the wagon and stage road of a day that is gone into the automobile road of to-day. The big stones have been removed, that crank cases may not be broken by contact with them; the roadbed made a bit smoother, and the turns widened. That is about all. In some places the grades have been lessened slightly — but it is not unusual to strike one ten or twelve per cent. hill after another. The curves, in spite of their widening, are sharp and frequent — often as

many as a hundred to the mile. The man who attempts speed on this sort of road deserves to have Death at his elbow.

So, the first two things to remember in the mountains are caution and slowness. Caution for the turns of the road, and a good push on the horn to warn the other fellow coming down or up hill; for the stops; and for a constant certainty that if your machine is to run off the road at all it is to scrape a fender on the rock side of the mountain, and not go careening over the other side, where the drop is sometimes two or three hundred feet. The man who drives the inside track, on a "one machine road" with his wheels well in close to the wall of the mountain, may scrape a fender slightly now and then, but he won't be picked up from somewhere down in the cañon.

As to the slowness of progress, a person rarely drives the mountains in a wild desire to get somewhere at a certain moment — except, of course, the case-hardened natives who really live in the hills and who know each crook and turn backwards. Therefore, a speed of fifteen to twenty miles an hour on the actual mountain roads is all one needs. More, once one's traveling at half that speed on the down grade of, say, an eighteen per cent. declivity, something will begin to tingle up and down your spine, the pine trees will seem to whiz by, and you'll find yourself wondering if the speedometer isn't a bit off.

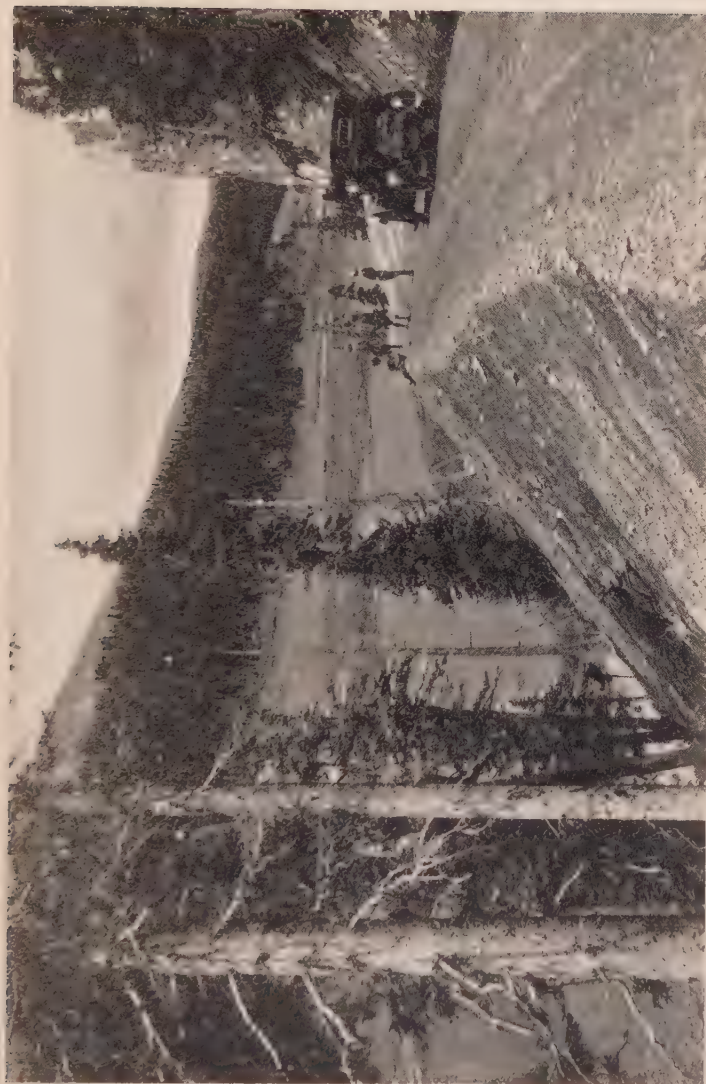
For, as has been mentioned before, the majority of mountain accidents come with the machine traveling downhill — due entirely to the fact that the driver hasn't the slightest knowledge of how to descend a grade. Yet it is the simplest rule in the world:

Go down the same way you came up!

In other words, in the hills, if it is necessary to make

a grade on low gear, that grade should be descended in the same manner and at the same speed, with the engine running. It isn't wise to save gas in the mountains by turning off the ignition. The constant revolutions of the engine cause unexploded gas to back up, with backfiring and a spurt which may come at the wrong time. So the wise mountaineer keeps his engine running — and takes his time.

It may consume three times as many minutes to go down a hill in low gear as it might to attempt it on high and trust to the brakes. But one's sure — and the other isn't. The pressure of brake bands sufficient to hold a car to a safe pace on mountain grades is so intense that the friction often causes the brake bands to start burning within the first half mile — and remember, you're dealing with professional hills, not the kind where a quarter of a mile rise is a long jog. Often, in a few miles, the altitude changes from approximately eight thousand feet to one of eleven thousand three hundred feet. In other words, those few miles your car must climb a half mile, straight up. More, when it reaches the summit it must drop down a half mile on the other side! Brake bands, not reënforced by the compression of an engine, cannot stand the strain. The result is that they catch fire, become glazed, and then — all in an instant — give way! Once that break comes, it is too late to shift gears. The machine shoots forward with suddenly doubled speed. A push at the gear lever only brings a horrible burring and a snapping of teeth, nothing more. So you do one of two things — go into the bank and smash the front end of your machine, or waltz gayly over the edge of the road to another Great Divide, from which no one ever has been able to send back a report on the scenery. Therefore



*Denver Tourist Bureau*

A GOOD PLACE TO KEEP THE EYE ON THE ROAD



the wise driver doesn't shift when he reaches the top; he merely goes on over the hump in low, and keeps in low until he is sure he has reached grades that permit him to shift to a higher gear.

As for going up the hill — even here are certain little rules that are necessary. In the first place, the man who goes into the mountains must either know his car or have some one along who does. And the sensible person will stop at the beginning of a long, stiff climb, down his pride and open up his hood. He will test the oil system, to be sure first of all that the crank case is full of the fluid, and secondly that the oil system is working and distributing properly. He will stand a moment and watch the fan belt, to be sure that it is not slipping. He will test his spark plugs for sure ignition, and then, as a last precaution, stop his engine, let out part of the radiator contents and refill with cool water. Then, his tests made, he will begin to ease his machine up the grade.

"Ease" is the exact word. The man accustomed to driving the mountain road will tell you some paradoxical things, among which is the fact that it is far easier on a machine, and especially on the cooling system, to send the old bus along easily and without a strain on second than it is to force that engine up a hill on high. Second gear is supposed to heat an engine. So it does under certain circumstances. But it also keeps an engine cooler under other circumstances than forced work in high! The same also pertains to low. When that engine must cough out each explosion the heat is lingering; no longer is it a quick, snappy combustion which departs almost the moment it occurs. It stays — and it heats. That's why the mountaineer grins and shifts into second, while the plainsman swears and tries to force his machine onward in high.

The machine that is traveling at the lower speed stands the chance of not boiling until long after the other one.

Again, when you meet the man who tells you that the cheap small car is the one for the mountains on account of its lightness, listen to him if you want to, agree with him if you care to preserve his friendship — but take it all with a grain of salt. Small, light, dinky-engined cars were made for light work, not for the sort of thing that one encounters in the Rockies.

Of course there is this advantage in the small car — the comparative ease with which parts can be obtained at the small-town garages and blacksmith shops. Parts for big cars in the mountains are few and far between. A breakage invariably means a wait of two or three days until a replacement can be received over uncertain railroads from the cities. Once upon a time, when I was new to the hills and didn't know enough to test my oil-pressure system before trying foolish things, I attempted a mountain pass. Halfway up I burned out a bearing. But there was nothing to do but to keep on going. I burned out another — and then a third. Finally I reached the top and clanked down the other side. There I met a man with a truck.

“Can you tow me to a garage, old man?” I asked.

“Sure. Regular price, though. Dollar a mile.”

I agreed. Late that afternoon I paid my savior a bill of eighty-three dollars! It was that distance to the nearest garage!

Which brings another thing to mind: don't put your faith in garages. Put it in yourself. The closest garages in the mountains are ten to fifteen miles apart. The farthest distance I know is something like one hundred and twenty-eight miles! Which is a long distance to walk if

you're out of gasoline, low on oil, if your fan belt isn't working or there's a knock in the engine! However, if the proper conditions are observed, the danger of parts breaking on a large car as against that of a small car, where the strain is many times greater, is less than a ratio of one to a hundred. The efficacy of a small car in the mountains, especially if it is overloaded, as it must be to carry the equipment of a touring party, is largely a fable.

For that matter, several things are fables when the mountains are concerned. One of them includes the supposition that all mountain roads are dry, sandy, gravelly affairs, able to stand any sort of deluge and five minutes later be their old, cheery, smiling selves again. It isn't true. Of course there are great sections of the mountains where there is that sand and gravel and permanency to the roads. Then again there are sections where it is necessary to wallow through the blackest gumbo that ever stuck to an automobile wheel; while in others there are greasy clays and 'dobe muds which, once they become properly slicked up, can defy the efforts of almost any car that does not possess in its outfit a set of mud hooks. More, these sections are situated in cloudburst areas, where it seems a part of the climate for clouds to gather suddenly and to turn loose everything they have been picking up for the last six months. One summer I was driving in a section of mountain country where the roads for fifty miles were 'dobe. The weather was fine, the road as hard as flint and as smooth as polished steel. Then something began coming up out of the west. A half hour later my companions and myself stood beside the machine and watched a wall of water, a hundred feet wide and fully four feet deep, rush down an arroyo and take the

road with it. After the cloudburst was gone and the torrent had departed, we managed to cross; then, with chains attached to every tire, we succeeded in finishing the rest of that fifty miles in an additional eight hours, an average of six miles an hour! Which should sew up the shroud of another fable.

Then, too, there is still something more to remember: winter doesn't finish its work in the mountains until months after it has removed itself from the lower countries. There is ice on nearly every high lake in early June, and snowdrifts which range from ten to fifty feet in depth. This often means mudholes while the lower country shows dry roads, ruts where there has been smoothness. The mountains, like the Heathen Chinees, are peculiar — and their peculiarity often extends to the effect they have upon inexperienced drivers.

Recently, coming over a mountain pass, I saw a wabbling machine in front of me, which veered dangerously toward the edge of a cliff, shied off, spurted forward, slowed just in time to miss another machine moving upgrade around a curve, and finally came to a stop in a clearing on the mountain side where a sawmill had established a small sawdust pile. Into this sawdust the machine ran its nose, plowed there a moment and came to a coughing stop. I halted my car behind it.

"Better let one of us take that machine down this hill for you," I urged. The man, his eyes staring, his lips moving nervously, attempted a laugh.

"I guess I can make it all right."

"Maybe you can — don't doubt it at all. But — how're your brakes working? "

"Fine."

"Been using compression any? "

"Huh? "

Whereupon I explained thoroughly the use of compression and touched the brake drums. They were unbearably hot. Again I explained the use of his gears, and he nodded in vague fashion. At last, "Are you absolutely sure you understand?"

But there was something in the man's eyes that didn't look natural or sane. I begged him to let me take his family of a wife and several children in my car. No, he guessed he could get down all right. I offered to drive his car down for him, and let one of the other occupants of my machine handle the extra automobile. He didn't seem to understand me. At last I was forced to go on. Ten minutes later we heard a crash. The man's car had gone over the edge, somersaulted four times and crushed the whole family!

Perhaps in ordinary circumstances he was a sane, level-headed man. When I saw him he was suffering from mountain fever and as mentally irresponsible as it was possible for a man to be! The mountains, with their sheer ascents, their lowering cliffs, their steep grades and constant turns, had got him. He was a living exemplification of a combination of fear and desperation; so frightened that he hardly knew what to do, so desperate in his non-understanding condition that he would accept no aid! It is a condition that is rare, of course, but one that is plausible. The driver was in a strange country where nothing seemed to go right. The slightest appearance of a hill caused his machine to cough and miss and heat. The grades were deceptive — ten per cent. looked almost like a level stretch. On one side was the constant danger of a sheer drop of hundreds of feet and the mind was naturally attracted to it. There were curves, curves, curves, and constant meetings with machines that sneaked around them as though they had been lying in wait to force a victim off

the road. There were meetings in which cars were forced to back, sometimes as much as a hundred feet or so, to a turnout, and backing on a grade is not an easy task. So withal it began to eat in deeper, deeper — until at last the driver lost his control and became panicky. The machine was constantly all but getting away from him; in his nervousness he forgot that he was putting his foot on the gas lever and shoving up the speed. Then the car went over the cliff.

All of which could have been avoided, for the same rules apply in an emergency of mountain driving as in anything else. They are very simple: merely a combination of Calmness and Common Sense!

## CHAPTER III

### CAMPING--OR MOVING?

**B**IG Bill Mason, who runs the garage over on the other side of the Continental Divide, is a person of convictions and characteristics, one of which is saying exactly what he thinks. And Bill had been dragged out of bed at one o'clock in the morning for a hurried trip up Berthoud Pass in his wrecking car, that he might tow into civilization the equipage and impedimenta of a Kansas tourist family, marooned since early evening with a broken axle.

He hadn't said much during the operation of putting a "dolly" under the front end of that automobile and the tortuous, slow journey into town. There were too many other things to think about — principally those of holding a wobbling car, filled with folks and fooleries, to the uncertain windings of a mountain highway. But once in the safety of the little village where he keeps his gasoline tank and his wrecking car and extra parts and other necessities, Big Bill proceeded deliberately until he reached the freight scales. Then, in the gray of dawning, he began yanking bags, rolls of canvas, suit cases, a set of bed springs and a half hundred other assorted things from the fenders, running boards, top and tonneau of the tourist machine, and piling them upon the platform. The sleepy owner protested. Big Bill glared.

"You've been cussin' out this car all the way into town," he bellowed. "Wonderin' what made it break

down. Well, I'm showin' you. Now get that troupe of yours out and step on them scales."

Bill spoke in a peremptory manner — and he was obeyed. Six persons, some bulky, some otherwise, joined the mass of duffle on the platform and Big Bill adjusted the weights. After which, he waved a grimy paw and made an announcement:

"That's why your danged bus broke down," he said. The scales pointed to a gross burden of 1640 pounds!

To which there was a sequel. Four days later, when a new axle had been procured by way of a circuitous route from Denver, and installed, the bill paid and a disgruntled vacation party once more ready to resume its journey, the chastened car owner took an inventory. More, he left behind more than half the duffle he had been carrying, and when he passed through the town on the way home, he was good sport enough to confess that the party never had missed it!

In fact, speaking from a mountain vacation standpoint, there is a growing need for a new form of S.P.C.A., a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Automobiles. Just why it is that when a person starts forth for an automobile camping trip, he believes it necessary to take along everything except the kitchen stove, I haven't the slightest idea. But it appears to be a general obsession. And I know of at least one case where even the stove wasn't left to mourn. It went right along!

Time was when a camping trip was viewed judiciously as regarded the weight of duffle which accompanied it. That was because the lugging of that duffle must be accomplished either by means of the human back, or in the rear end of a surrey or buggy where there was none too much room. But times have changed. In the last five or

six years, the United States has gone camping mad. In one Rocky Mountain town, thirty-eight miles above Denver on the Victory Highway, the count of the combined constable and twenty-four-hour traffic officer shows that often as many as six thousand automobiles pass through in a day, the majority of which are "equipped" for the outdoors. Not that these cars are headed toward some glen where, in a chosen spot, a camp will be erected and the party remain for a couple of weeks at a stretch, apart from civilization and with a need for supplies to last that length of time. Quite the reverse; the rule of to-day is to cover as much ground as possible, stopping at one spot one night, waking the next morning and hurrying on again. Of these, not more than twenty per cent. of the cars have approached the camping problem with anything regarding a view toward practicability or common sense!

We've become a softened nation. There may be a pioneer craze on just now, but it consists more of lounging in an easy chair and reading about the brave deeds of our forefathers, or of sitting in a comfortable theater seat and viewing those things made real upon a motion-picture screen, than of anything approaching actual contact with the difficulties of Nature. If the Plains were to be conquered to-day, I am afraid that the luxuries necessary would, if placed end to end, reach from Calexico, California, to Shanghai, China, via Jacksonville, and back to Emporia, Kansas! Judging merely, of course, from the things a mountaineer sees piled upon the average gasping, struggling motor car, bound for "just a little camping trip."

Naturally, there are reasons for it all. One is purely psychological: a ton of coal is never as heavy when it is lifted a scuttle at a time as when one tries to move the

whole thing at once. Hence, when several persons are loading an automobile for a little jaunt into outdoor life, the gross weight is never considered; all that appeals is the weight of the heaviest article. Nor, for some strange reasons, do persons ever consider that they themselves weigh anything. Nor are road conditions, effects of weather, or the power-lessening strength of grades given their proper consideration. The average city man gauges his car according to an unfair standard: what it will do on the steep, paved hill in the city, with four passengers, it should do on a steeper unpaved road in the country with six passengers, several tarpaulins, innumerable rolls of heavy, cotton bed coverings, a couple of rifles, a forty-pound box of dirt containing fifty fishing worms (much dirt for good health), five camp chairs, two camp cots, or a wooden sided bed spring laced tastefully on top of the car, a suit case apiece for every person traveling, a sack of coal for the fire, a hundred pounds of canned goods and other groceries, and any other odds and ends which happen to be lying loose around the house.

An unjust comparison? Not at all. In fact, not nearly in keeping with any number of instances which are recallable from actual experience. I recently received a letter from a young man contemplating a trip in the Rocky Mountains. He named his car, a sturdy enough automobile of the cheap variety, but far removed indeed from a vehicle of trucking power. Yet all he wanted to take along was a party of five persons besides himself, a trailer weighing eight hundred and sixty one pounds, a forty-foot tent, two iron beds with springs and mattresses, an iron stove and other equipment built upon the same lines. Or to go further:

One rainy day last spring, a floundering mud-splattered

car wobbled up the main street of town and stopped in front of the garage. Something was wrong. The car wouldn't pull. On the last grade, it had been a matter of heroic measures, dragging along in low, with the engine boiling every mile or so. The owner simply couldn't understand it. We fell to talking.

"I don't know what's come over the old concrete mixer," he said. "It never acted like this before."

"How much of a load are you carrying?" I asked.

"Not anything unusual. Only six people."

"So?" I glanced at the car. The fenders were so low in the rear that two mud lanes had been formed in them where the rear wheels had touched, pushing the mud to the sides, and naturally, forming an impediment to travel. The springs were nearly straight, so great was the weight upon them. I pressed the question. "But you're carrying equipment too."

The motorist beamed.

"You know it," he announced proudly. "Say, nobody ever went out better fitted up than I am. When I camp, I camp. Say, do you know what I've got? An ice box! Invented it myself. Look!"

He led the way to the back of the car, where, lashed in unexplainable fashion to the tire carrier and the top braces, was a heavy oaken box, which must have weighed all of fifty pounds. Within, he confessed, was fifty pounds of ice. At least, there had been fifty pounds when he had started.

"And where are you going?" I asked.

"Up Fall River."

"How'll you get ice there?"

"Oh, I'll come down into town for it every day or so."

"Great. How much provisions are you carrying?"

He went over the list: sixty pieces of canned goods, weighing from four ounces to two pounds, bottles of condiments and sauces, a fourteen-pound ham, a side of bacon, and so on interminably. Finally, a light began to dawn upon him, and he started to estimate the weight of the various things he was carrying to a camp from which he intended to make almost daily trips into a base of supplies. The total was nearly a thousand pounds!

Here was the uselessness of it all: The country into which he was going was of sufficient altitude to allow a temperature near the freezing point every night, and cool enough in the little glens by the stream to keep any provisions he desired at refrigerator temperature. He had brought with him, among other things, eight loaves of bread, which in their mere wrappings of paper, could not possibly resist going stale. I suggested to him that when the camping trip was over, he would throw away most of the ham and much of the bacon, a true prediction. Also that he would not use one third of the clothing, or any of the hundred and one other things with which he weighted down his car. It was a safe prophecy. I've been on camping trips myself, and in less experienced days, I've done the same fool things he was doing.

One can generally spot a man who knows mountains, knows motor cars and knows camping. He will, in the first place, have a tight bedding roll, filled with light, woolen army blankets, which have more warmth than three times their number of cotton affairs, and which can be compressed into a small space. He will not carry camp chairs — all for the good reason that he knows that the simplest thing in camping is to find a place to sit down. He will not be lugging along bed springs and mattresses, but instead, will have either sleeping bags which obviate blan-

kets, or pneumatic mattresses, which are waterproof, easily pumped up, light, compressible, and far more comfortable than any cot ever invented.

For a tent, he will have a three-piece affair, not one of these bulky things with a thousand and one entrances and exits and fol-de-rols. I have seen tents which, if the far-famed Arabs had striven to fold them silently and steal away, would have sounded like the gentle cooing of a boiler factory. Things with conical tops for "beauty," striped in pretty designs and necessitating from one to three tent poles to hold them erect, to say nothing of stakes and ropes and standards! Just why "beauty" is desired in a camp tent, I do not know. Especially when one is going into country where the sunsets are rose and mauve and purple and gold; where blood-red cliffs rise from mottled green bases; where the pines and spruce and evergreens of the hills stretch away in constantly lessening heights until at last they become mere fernlike fronds in the distance; where waters bubble blue-white and even the chipmunks and scolding magpies are masterpieces of coloration. To the mountaineer, there is nothing prettier than an inconspicuous tent in a shelter of trees, and a fire blazing before it. But perhaps he doesn't know Nature.

That tent, by the way, is the great problem of the man who wants to travel lightly. It must be staunch and secure and serviceable, yet not heavy. For this reason, the professional camper often makes his own tent, simply and without fol-de-rols. Here's how he does it:

He takes first a width of waterproof canvas as wide as the top of his automobile, with two wide strips of canvas running from a spot about six feet from one end, this to fit over the machine and tie off on the other side, allowing a wall to drop down on the side of the machine. Then, a

few inches in on each side, he sews a strip of canvas equipped with small steel rings. Following which he cuts two triangular sections for the sides, each of these fitted with light harness snaps. He carries two stakes, no more, and these of light, strong steel, for the key stakes. I have yet to see the patent, sawed, wooden tent stake that wasn't a delusion and a snare — at least for the mountains. When one hits a small boulder three inches under the surface of the ground and pounds and pounds with all his strength in an attempt to penetrate stone with wood, something simply has to happen to that stake. A light steel affair is small in circumference. It will find a hole for itself where no wood can go, and it will stay there as long as you need it.

The other stakes are more of a decoration, anyway, to hold the canvas in shape and they can be cut at the camping ground; the key stakes hold the tent, the others merely support it.

The tie-off ropes are not permanently affixed to the canvas. Instead, they are merely looped or knotted affairs, with the other end taped against fraying, so that they can be slipped in or out of rings at will.

Now, when the camper reaches his resting spot for the night, there is no laborious "putting up of a tent." Instead, he throws the light top piece into place, and ties it off. Then, one by one, he raises the equally light sides — light because he is not dragging the whole tent with him every time he moves — and clips them into place by the simple operation of pressing the harness snaps against the rings. The slight flap of a few inches protruding at each side provides a rain-shed. One end of each side ties off to an automobile wheel. The other runs to the tie-off point of the top, which in turn hooks up to a key stake. And

there you are. The entrance slit in one side is kept closed by the simple operation of a harness clip and a ring. A few wooden pins set between the steel ones provide against sagging. That's all. Difficult, isn't it?

So it goes all through the list, the equipment of the person who camps comfortably and sensibly. In this connection, there is no such thing as absolute comfort in camping within the reach of any one who cannot afford to have following him a retinue of vehicles and attendants. By absolute comfort, I mean that it is not possible for one to reproduce in the open the conveniences of home; it is this effort which leads to interminable overloading and lugging along of useless, nonsensical things, which often cause not only more discomfort but decided inconvenience and trouble as well. As an example:

A camping friend, who happens to be a magazine editor, and myself have a little song which we learned from a hobo, and which we bawl forth to the assembled mountains whenever we start on a certain section of road in Colorado. It hasn't much harmony, but there's a certain degree of logic, and we sing it with all our heart and soul, especially if there are a few black-bottomed clouds loading around the serrated tops of Old Rabbit Ear Pass, fifty miles in the distance. It goes:

Oh, there's hills an' holes an' 'dobe,  
An' there's sage thet isn't green —  
An' th' weather West o' Kremmlin'  
Is th' worst I ever seen!

The reason being that out there, in the long stretch west of Kremmling, is an expanse of hard-surfaced 'dobe when the sun has shone, and the most hellish wallow-hole of troubles, ruts and disappointments that I ever hope to

bump into when the skies open, and the skies have a habit of opening pretty often.

The road is a hold-over from the old stage days. It is 'dobe soil for fifteen miles, a gray, soapy, slimy, greasy, slippery, treacherous concoction of Hades which becomes such in five minutes of rain, and against which chains are efficacious only because they are less dangerous than the bare tire. More, when one hits 'dobe, he puts on four chains, if he is a wise motorist, not two. The front wheels have a delightfully uncertain quality of deciding to move off the road and seek a new highway for themselves, usually on a pitch of about ten per cent., when the mountain decides to dip off into nothingness for a hundred feet or so. The bad feature is that once the front wheels get this into their heads, the hind wheels become imbued with the same idea, chains or no chains.

So west of Kremmling, there's 'dobe, and it must remain so until a real road, now under construction, is completed, which will be soon, thank goodness! A year or so ago, hub deep in the slippery stuff, grinding along in low with a feeling of unutterable speed with every shift to second, hugging the ruts on the hillside on every rise and dip, easing across the culverts while wriggling, wormlike sensations ran up and down my spine, I had fought away about ten miles. Suddenly to stop! A sedan of a highly popular make had all the road in front of me. It was standing still.

That is, it was getting up all the power it possessed, roaring furiously for a moment, spurting for a few inches, and then dying in disgust. This continued for a quarter of an hour, until the engine boiled. Then we went into consultation. I glanced upward to a large, bundlesome something on top, covered by a sewed-together affair of

gunny sacking. A wan-faced tourist, bent dejectedly over the wheel, faced me in utter defeat.

"She's just quit on me," he announced. "I don't know what's the matter. She never did anything like this before."

Strange, but automobiles never do anything "like this" — until they do it. I glanced at the road ahead; it did not look like a heavy pull; besides, my grade gauge, a bit of mountain-driving equipment devised upon the same principle as a carpenter's level, showed only four per cent. Therefore, grade was not the cause. When the engine cooled, he idled it — compression and combustion seemed perfect. But it wouldn't pull the hill.

I queried his load. It was bad enough, but not too bad. The mystery deepened. Then I noticed that the rear springs were flattened, the fenders resting hard upon the tires, and jerking wildly at every attempted spurt of the machine. But the springs weren't broken. Again I looked upward:

"What's that on top?" I asked.

The man waved a hand.

"Nothing — just a mattress. It don't weigh over thirty pounds."

"Waterproof covering?"

"Well — no. Just that gunny sacking."

The mystery was over. It required four of us to drag that thing off the top of the car, and when at last, a sloshing weight, it rolled to the ground, the poor old automobile seemed to literally jump upward on its springs. It had been raining all day, and all day that mattress had been soaking up water until the unlucky camper might as well have been carrying a hogshead or so of the weighty fluid. It had been the final straw, providing a burden in

excess of the engine power. The machine whizzed along almost gaily after that. Returning two weeks later, that mattress still lay by the side of the road, a tribute to the love of "comfort."

So it goes. Travel light. That's the professional camper's motto, and it is not an impossible one. Examine the usual line of cooking utensils and you'll find enough burdensome junk to equip a small-sized kitchen: heavy skillet or frying pan, almost as heavy granite ware — the usual idea of fitting out for a camping trip is to use things which have been discarded around the house. That is the wrong idea.

An automobile is just so much power, no more. The open country is, as yet, and will remain for a good many years, a place of great or small difficulties. The mountains have been robbed of a good many of their grades, but ten per cent. affairs still remain in plenty. Therefore, the man who desires to enjoy his camping trip will watch weight in the every minute of his preparation. More, if he is wise, and if he gives a little thought to the matter of equipment beforehand, he will not sacrifice one iota of comfort. Nor will he go deep into expense. On the contrary, the indications are that he will benefit in both ways.

I carry everything from a stove to a dishpan. To say nothing of a broiler for steaks, six of everything for eating, frying pan, stewpan, coffeepot and what not. It weighs less than twelve pounds. It took a bit of shopping to find it, but it was found. Which brings up another angle of camping equipment: so much of it is sold on its looks, or because the salesman who tells you of its marvellous benefits hasn't been out of the city for fourteen years and doesn't know what he is talking about.

This, in its natural sequence, brings us to the matter of



*Denver Tourist Bureau*

A MOUNTAIN AUTOMOBILE CAMP



provisions. The man who lugged along eight loaves of bread which were sure to go stale was no exception. That, in truth, is the thing which happens most of all — overloading with food, particularly canned goods. It's the old idea of saving money.

The first time I ever took a mountain trip, I was to be gone for two weeks. Two weeks of camping to me meant two weeks of provisions. Naturally, things would be a bit higher when we got out of the city, and I intended to save money. I just *must* save money. So I bought everything I thought I would use, loaded up a box with a baked ham, filled another box with bread, and got canned goods in proportion to how much I felt sure all of us would eat. Events didn't turn out exactly the way that I figured them. On the third day, the bunch got tired of beans. That meant nine of a dozen cans of Boston Baked came home with us. The same was true of potted ham, potted beef, corn, tomatoes and what not. About the third day out, we discovered that we liked on the road about what we liked at home, and that when fresh vegetables beckoned to us from the country store window, we bought them. Also that ham as a steady diet was not nearly as good as a steak now and then. The result was that instead of saving money, I found that I had wasted it. The ham became moldy. The bread dried out. Half the heavy provisioning of butter turned rancid, and the paper labels of the cans came off from jolting around in the car, with the result that when I tried to explain my economy by saying the returned concoctions "could be used up around the house", it meant an eternal gamble as to whether we'd have canned pears for dessert, or succotash.

So I follow the wiser system now — that of the man who buys as he goes along, never carrying more than a

two days' supply. The traveler who gets comfort out of camping-motoring is one who averages his joys. He knows he isn't going to be as comfortable as he is at home, and he seeks a percentage. To this end, he does several things.

In the first place, he doesn't rush his journey. The usual way of going camping is to give a two weeks' imitation of catching a train: drive like the wind all day, fighting like mad to hold to a certain mileage, with the result that the passing country streams by in an unnoticed haze instead of an enjoyable panorama, and the slightest interruption causes a fit of distemper and a lingering sense of disappointment. The wise camper doesn't do that. He sets himself a slow schedule, so that he can take his time, stop where he pleases, buy his supplies and leisurely set up and take down his camp.

Nor does he make himself uncomfortable all day for the sake of a few minutes or hours of comfort in the camping place. It is nothing in the hills to see outfits traveling the whole day in tiring, cramped positions, their feet sticking out of the sides of the cars, or jammed up under their chins, their whole frames a target for every bump in the road, simply because the place where their feet should be is filled seat-high with folding, wooden "party" chairs, to rest upon when, at dusk, they reach camp and are too tired to take the blamed things out of the machine.

He'll also realize that a camping trip is a bit of a community affair, and that individualism isn't a thing to be terribly desired. To that end, he won't carry a suit case for every member of his party, hooked to the top of the car, the fenders, or anywhere else the things can be attached. He'll go to an army store, where they sell such things cheaply, figuring that the weight and discomfort

he saves will more than make up for a slight expense, and he'll buy one or a pair of what was known in the army as "officer's clothing rolls."

They're capacious things, those clothing rolls. Into one of them, each taking a section for the individuality of it, several persons can pack everything they'll need on a camping trip — without lost space. After this is done, the things of all things that will mark him as a wise and experienced camper are his loading, the distribution of his weight, and his thoughtfulness for the other fellow.

Out in the mountain country, we have a habit of identifying the person who comes from the wide roads of the flat country without even looking at his license plate. If his tent, for instance, is loaded on the driver's side "where he can watch it", and held in place only by a weak parcel holder which allows it to swing six or eight inches beyond the running board, or if that running board contains a box which juts forth, or if a collection of suit cases, tied to the top supports, swings carelessly into the center of the road, it's a ten to one bet that he came from "back there." And if he happens to be uncivil about the rules of the road, we're sure of it.

Not that the tourist is uncivil knowingly. He isn't. A tourist is a human being, and a man from the mountains, traveling in the low country, is just as much of a tourist as a man from the low country traveling in the mountains. The thing is that the tourist as he comes to us doesn't know the country. He isn't fully convinced that driving on mountain roads is a business matter, that there is real danger in passing another car on a curve, for the simple reason that he can't see around that curve and doesn't know what is coming from the other side. He doesn't realize either that the roads out in the hills are not the

free, wide things that he is accustomed to travel back home.

Road courtesy is a fetich with persons accustomed to the mountains. Not that they are so terribly polite or because they are super-beings. But simply because it is dangerous not to be courteous. In the level countries, when a person is shoved off the road by some discourteous driver, it generally means little or nothing in the way of consequences. But if you should happen to be shoved off the precipitous road of the Trough Road in Western Colorado, you'd travel about two thousand three hundred feet before you stopped falling! Mountain roads are not easy things to build; often they must be blasted from the granite. Therefore, they are not any wider than necessary. Hence, when a driver comes galumping along with a protrusion from the inner running board, it means a regauging of passing space, and perhaps a mistake in that allowance. So the mountain driver puts anything that may project on the outer running board where it will not interfere with the other fellow.

Likewise, he observes the rules of courtesy. When some one honks behind him, he doesn't swing into the middle rut and hold the road. He gives up unprotestingly. When he is coming downgrade on a narrow, steep incline, he stops at the first turnout to allow the man coming up to pass, not because he is a model of graciousness, but because he knows it is dangerous for an upbound car to pull out, stop, hold itself against a steep incline and start again, thus fighting against gravity, the killing of the engine and other trivialities that may murder everybody in the machine. When he needs chains, he puts on chains, no matter if he thinks he can make the road without them. If his machine should happen to sideswipe about the time he



*Denver Tourist Bureau*

SKY LINE DRIVE, CAÑON CITY



was passing the other fellow, he might have to call a derrick to get that other fellow out of the bottom of the cañon.

In other words, the mountaineer, as a rule, does a little thinking beforehand, with the strange result that, in spite of the fact that there is a measure of danger in the negotiation of Rocky Mountain roads, there is a less percentage of fatalities upon them than there is upon the apparently less risky roads of the lower country. The reason being that there's less foolishness.

And as there is less foolishness in driving, so is there less foolishness when one prepares to sleep out for awhile. After all, it is only a matter of preparation. Observe the ordinary man when he is afflicted with the camping bug, and you'll notice that he spends weeks in mapping his route, deciding where he shall go, how many miles he will make and what it will cost to the gallon. He wears a blank stare, and talks only of spare tires and blue books. He knows exactly where he's going and how he's going to get there. Is there any reason that he should not give a like amount of thought to his equipment?

## CHAPTER IV

### SMOOTHING IT

I RECENTLY received a letter from Jim which caused me pain and apprehension. Jim's one of my old friends. We were pals together, in other years, but it's about over now. For Jim wrote from New York, and Jim said:

"I'm coming out to that little mountain town of yours next summer, and I want you to take me out in the hills. You know, the 'where men are men' stuff. I just want to get right in God's out of doors, and be next to nature. To really rough it, you know."

That's the trouble — I do know. I know too, that when Jim gets on the train next summer to go home again, his entire thoughts for the following six months will concern the most soul-satisfying manner in which to murder a person whom he thought was a true friend, but who turned out to be everything from a first-class fiend to a public executioner.

The trouble being, of course, that I, like the rest of those who "rough it" as a matter of course, am a literal-minded cuss. We take folks too much at their word, even when we know that we'll be hated for it. We're always trustful: perhaps the next one will be the exception. But it isn't, and we lose another friend.

Because the truth of the matter is that Jim doesn't want to rough it at all. He doesn't want to lose one convenience of the city, or be discommoded for a moment.

What he really wants to do is to get a good adventure story, a soft place in the shade, somebody at the other end of the bell if he needs anything, and read an exciting tale where the hero ploughs over mountain top and through roaring gulch for twenty-four hours straight and finally rescues the heroine. Jim wants to do that very thing too — but he wants it in his imagination, not in actuality. About the first time that he feels a good-sized boulder pressing between his shoulder blades and with only a blanket between him and his tormentor, Jim knows immediately what he really desires. He wants to go back to the city, the dear old comfortable city, with its doctors and its dentists and automobiles and soft chairs and comforts. He's through with roughing it and all things attendant — even to the persons on the trip. Of course there are exceptions. There are also exceptions to the rule that persons have two eyes, one mouth and five fingers on each hand. They are rarities.

Out at the place that Jim had in mind, at the edge of the High Country of the Rocky Mountains, close to the rocky, snow-swept regions of timber line, there are automobile roads, it is true, and good ones, traveling to various resorts which contain every creature comfort. But there are also places where auto roads cease to be, dissembling themselves into rocky scars in the hills which can be traversed only by a four-horse team, or more often by horseback or on foot. These are the districts which lure the mountaineer, and the places to which his imagination turns when some one mentions getting out into the open. The automobile road doesn't mean the open to persons who live within touch of wilder spots. He wants to get away from the lanes of civilization, the city man thinks he wants to do the same thing — and there the trouble starts.

Time was when all of life, whether in the country or the city, was attended by a certain amount of muscle-strengthening exercise. Nor was that much more than a dozen years ago, before the automobile leaped into the place it now occupies as a constant slave to the lazy streak that is in all of us. Back in those ancient days, men often walked to work or chinned themselves on the strap of a slow-moving street car. One form of exercise begetting another, more persons indulged in sports instead of watching them. The residence districts in the evening were alive with office men "playing catch" or "pitching horse-shoes" or hoeing the garden or mowing the lawn and doing various other things which engaged the strength-building properties of many muscles. But the automobile has cut into all this sadly. To-day, the average man's exertions consist of a few moments of advertised exercise, which is supposed to make a Sandow out of any one in three months — but which doesn't. After that, he rides to work in his car, rides home again, and either takes a ride in the evening — or does his sitting at home. The result is that the average man of the city — and often of the small town — is doctor-ridden with everything from "nerves", which all too often is nothing but biliousness, to really serious ailments. He's dentist-ridden because he eats soft foods. And he is about as fit to go out and rough it in the real sense as a hippopotamus is fit to turn handsprings. The only trouble is that he doesn't know it.

Back in those old days, it all was different. A certain amount of exercise formed a groundwork for hardier exertions. When some one wanted to take a fishing trip, it wasn't a matter of an automobile, a water-proofed tent, thermos bottles, cots, tables, chairs, complete cooking and

serving outfits, tablecloths, and all the rest of the things which are an everyday part of "camping out" equipment in these days when the amount of the paraphernalia is limited only by the carrying power of the automobile. Back in the dark ages of twelve or fifteen years ago, when one got away from the railroad, he did it with a buggy or at best a team, and he traveled light. Then, sleeping on the ground was merely sleeping on the ground, nothing more, and it was looked upon as really enjoyable. My favorite memories are of my boyhood days, when I spent the summers on the farm, and the whole countryside — men, women and children — congregated at some favorite fishing spot to spend a week or so "campin' out." But even that was a luxurious affair. Straw was brought along for the women to put under their blankets, so their frail forms would have a cushion to rest upon o' nights! Especially if they had been participants in the square-dance contest which had been held upon a platform raised upon fence rails, and which ran continuously from four o'clock in the afternoon until the fiddlers "caved in" from exhaustion.

Then came the automobile and put an end to all such foolishness. Why stay out all night and sleep on the hard ground, when the old bus could drag one home again in a couple of hours? The result is that about all that is left of the hardihood of those dark ages is the desire. That seems permanent, perhaps due to memories of childhood which will be scornfully ignored by the next generation. But with the present one, which once did do such things, the complex is as strong as anything Freud ever wrote volumes about.

Especially as concerns the mountains. Some way, the word seems to have gotten around that the mountains,

especially the Rockies, are still "God's out of doors;" that when one goes to them, one should "live next to Nature" and "really rough it." The fact that the Rockies — especially the ones which the tourist sees — have plenty of comfortable hotels, lodges, havens, "rests", and what not, where there is everything from down pillows to long-distance connection with New York, does not seem to be taken into consideration. Folks who go to the mountains simply must "rough it", and there's nothing else to do about the matter.

I know, because, in desperation, I've tried. A few years of sad experiences had caused me to sit down and think. For five years I had been breaking the hearts of friends because I'd been giving them what they asked for. Now I would try giving them what they really wanted. So I bought a five-room cottage at a pretty lake in the high mountains, where there were steel boats, trout hatcheries to supply the main body of water with catchable fish, and, in fact, everything but a bathroom. That I deleted, as a part of "roughing it." But it didn't work.

My friends from the city wanted to get back to Nature. There wasn't anything to do but to lug them up to another lake at the top of the Continental Divide, where they got what they'd asked for. After which, they moved up their dates of returning home, and told me I needn't bother to take them down to the station.

It's a queer feeling, that cutting away from the civilized, in these days when it seems that conveniences should grow on bushes. Out in the Rockies, we have a habit of driving our cars as far as they can negotiate the rocky roads without putting a hole through the crankcase, and then, with the equipment of the camp upon our backs, striking out the rest of the way on foot. Even to the

seasoned, there is that little feeling of departure, like crossing a burning bridge which is to fall the minute one has reached the other side, cutting off retreat.

Away from civilization, from the store, from the telephone and telegraph. As it hits those who are accustomed to it, so is it magnified a thousandfold to those who are suffering thus as a "vacation." For the first half-mile or so, it is wonderful. The grade appears easy and the old head who is leading the way has taken a pace that seems foolishly slow; the hills are beautiful and everything is so glorious that the novice just wishes he could call up so and so and tell them about it. Then suddenly the reminder comes that there is no telephone.

It seems impossible. No telephone, no telegraph, no houses; merely the succession of mountains piling higher and higher, as range after range they ascend to the Continental Divide. Merely the chipmunks scampering along the trail, or a camp robber scolding in a near-by tree — that and the silence of the pines, paradoxically carrying an attitude of quietude even when they are noisy with the wind, like the rumbling of a waterfall which does not disturb the woodland about it.

No telephone — and coincidentally comes the wonderment of what would happen in case of accident. Or suppose somebody back home should die! That is the favorite. The fact that all were well at the moment of parting makes little difference. Somebody might die — and then what? The newcomer to the hills asks a question, and wonders suddenly why his breath is so short:

"Are there many accidents in these hills?"

The answer is discouraging, simply because of its brevity and lack of concern for the subject:

"Oh, sometimes."

"What kind?" Inevitably there arises a vision of wild animals.

"Oh, all kinds. Better save your wind — tough grade ahead."

"But —" it is just about this place that a rest is needed anyway. "— what would happen if one of us would get hurt?"

Still discouragement:

"Oh, we'd manage. There's two of us."

"Yes, but if we'd sprain our ankles on some of these rocks —?"

Whereupon the eyes of the old head grow wide, and a curl of scorn comes to his lips.

"Sprain whose ankles?" he asks. "Forget it! You're dressed right."

Which, in a sentence, expresses many paragraphs. There are accidents in the mountains, sprained ankles and such. But they don't happen often to the mountaineer or the man under his guidance. Those are the things which rise up to confront the person who has outfitted in New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago and like points at his favorite sporting goods store for a trip "in the open." And he has gone to the mountains attired beautifully, tastefully, and thoroughly out of harmony with the country which he is to visit. In the usual mountain town, when the tourists arrive, the casualty list to clothing every summer is enormous. Golf trousers are slaughtered without mercy. Nice, springy low-cut "outing shoes" fall before the onslaught of the enemy like grain before a scythe, and as for wool sport hose, guaranteed to catch every raspberry briar, spinegrass and what not, the death rate is pitiable. It is true that these things are worn in the mountains. But their place is on the mountain golf course, not the moun-

tain trail. And as a rule visitors do not trek mountainwards with their "outing outfits" for golf. They buy them on the recommendation of the clothing salesman who never has been ten miles from his store, as just the thing for the outdoors, to be discarded once the tourist falls into the hands of the real mountaineer. Then he is led to a store which may not be much for looks or for window display, but which is highly efficient when it comes to giving a person what he needs for the high hills. The first thing that travels outward is a suit of light woolen underwear.

"You'll need it," says the storekeeper. "First thing, it takes up perspiration when you're on the grade. Then when the weather cools down, it keeps you from catching cold."

That's a habit of the weather in the high hills — to become cool. It is one of the best tricks it knows. The sun shines hot while the sun is on the job. But let that sun depart, and the wind comes straight from the snowdrifts. Evening brings a drop in the temperature of from five to twenty degrees, growing steadily colder as night progresses. More than once have I sweltered on a raft all the afternoon within five hundred feet of the very top of the Continental Divide, and with snowdrifts to the right, left, fore and aft of me. And the next morning at sunrise, I have hied myself forth to break the coating of ice on the lake to gain water for the morning ablutions! This in the last weeks of June! To say nothing of the first weeks of September!

So, after the underwear, comes a like assortment — oversized "pac" boots, for instance, with moccasined toes and heavy leather uppers which lace high about the legs, giving a strong support to the ankles; following the fitting, the storekeeper leads the way to a big can of

waterproof grease which he souses well upon every inch of the leather, ruining the looks but doing much for flexibility and immunity to moisture. The high mountains are not an arid waste. They are absolutely the opposite: stretches of black, marsh ground in which the flowers grow in such profusion as to hide the earth, and from which water springs at the first weight of the human body; streams to cross, stretches of seepage, draining all summer from the eternal drifts high above, and which can be negotiated only by plunging through. Absorbent leather is not a good thing in such a place as this. Nor is a low-cut shoe. One wants boots, waterproofed, for the efficacy of leather that can turn water is as necessary as soles that will keep pebbles from the balls of the feet, or uppers that hold the ankles from turning when a boulder gets in the way.

So much for the boots. Then corduroy breeches, corduroy in preference to moleskin or khaki or whipcord. Because corduroy is tough; because it is warm; and because it has certain qualities for turning water. A wool shirt goes without saying. And equally, a sheepskin lined vest.

Sheepskin lined? In the summer? Yes, sheepskin lined in the summer. And if one intends to reach the backbone country and stay there after the sun goes down, the storekeeper more than likely will throw in a sheepskin lined coat. There is nothing so cold as the wind from the Continental Divide after the sun goes down. It may not reach a low degree of temperature, perhaps not below forty. But it has a penetration that would go through a steel vault.

So the outfit is complete, and the baggy trousers that would catch on every twig, the wool hose that would

gather briars, the low shoes that would act as a placer mine for pebbles are left behind. They're not the thing for the hills, just as the fishing outfits which one buys back East often are not the things; simply because they're not built for the kind of work they have to do. Trout are the fish of the mountains. And trout are finicky beings. They'll take one fly in one locality and they won't look at it in another. Of course, the dyed-in-the-wool fisherman carries every fly in the catalogue and a few special ones that he's made himself. The ordinary man goes to the hardware store in the locality in which he's going to fish and asks "what they're takin' best right now." The hardware store man usually knows.

But to get back to that state of mind when one leaves civilization. As I said, the first mile or so is fine. If on foot, the walking seems easy. If on horseback, the ride seems wonderful. Then things begin to happen. Either the pace or the horse becomes galling. If one is on foot, the type of walking is far different from that of the country road; if on the back of one of the plodding, slow-poking mountain horses which, in real life, are so different from the movie type of rearing, plunging animal, that steady jerk and pull, jerk and pull of ascent, or the stiff-legged, spine-jolting action of descent, begins to get on one's nerves and muscles. Soon, there's another question:

"There's a good deal of pneumonia in these mountains, isn't there? "

It's just about this time that the mountaineer gives an inward groan. His troubles are beginning.

No one who has not spent considerable time away from a railroad or an automobile road with persons unaccustomed to anything but city life can realize how doctor-bound is the average mortal. Time was when a doctor

amounted to something, to be visited or be called only in a matter of real illness. That time is gone now. The doctor has become as inconspicuous and as necessary as an electric push button, so common in the life of the ordinary mortal that he isn't even considered — until the mortal becomes panicky at his absence. In daily life when he has had a "symptom" all that has been necessary has been to reach for the telephone, make an appointment and then have his mind put at ease. But away from the railroad, the automobile road, the telephone and the telegraph, everything is changed, the doctor is far away, the mind can do as it pleases, and was there ever a mind which wasn't obsessed with the fact that its owner was sure to move out of this world the minute he got away from medical assistance?

Therefore, for the newcomer to the wilds, the symptoms begin almost with the departure from civilization. If he's riding a horse, his back begins to ache, and as every one knows, a severe backache is always the forerunner of something terribly serious. Then his head begins to pound, and his eyes to feel as if they were being pushed out of his head. A strange congestive condition comes to his lungs. He raises a hand. His lips are dry and parched. His face is hot. Fever! Fever! Combined with aching back, paining lungs, hot breath, high blood pressure! Again he asks a question.

"Pneumonia takes 'em off pretty quick here in the hills, doesn't it? "

Just to be heartless, the veteran usually replies, "It sure does! "

After that, silence. Deep, ominous silence. Finally, "About what time of the year is pneumonia worst in the mountains? "

Again, heartlessly, "Oh, most any time."

Which is as much scorn as the mountaineer can utter. Pneumonia is another pet bugbear of the hills, just like the fabled catamount and the wild animals that one should ward off with a blazing fire at night, and the rattlesnake that will follow for days to avenge the death of a comrade. Of course there is pneumonia in the mountains. And when it sinks its fangs into a victim, it generally gets him. Just as it gets him on the seacoast, or in the Middle States or anywhere else. But the forests are not filled with horrible pneumonia germs waiting gleefully to leap forth at their victim. Instead, they are filled with coniferous odors which are beneficial to the lungs. All the trouble that the visitor is having is due to just one innocent thing: altitude. He is some five or six thousand feet above his usual level of living. He is breathing harder and that hurts his lungs. His heart is working faster and that raises his blood activity, thus causing his eyes to pop and his head to pound. Sometimes he has a nosebleed, and after that he feels better. But it's senseless to try to explain this to the ordinary mortal, cut off for the first time in years from telephonic communication with his dear old doctor. He knows what's wrong, and nothing can dissuade him!

He has whatever has been his favorite fear. If, five years before, his doctor had told him that there was a possibility at some time in his life that he would have appendicitis, now is that time. If he ever had acute bronchitis and has been warned against following complications, those complications have just arrived, bringing all their family. If he has ever been examined for life insurance and the doctor has put a rubber band around his arm, squeezed a bulb and then said he was ten degrees off on his

pressure, something has chosen this particular moment at which to burst, no doubt his Great Aorta. I am no doctor, yet I have treated pneumonia, appendicitis, gallstones, high blood pressure, typhoid fever, neuritis, rheumatism and rattlesnake bite, and have gotten a cure in practically every instance. In case a panting world should desire the remedy, it is simply this: to stand the complaints until they got on one's nerves, and then in a loud, explosive tone, exclaim:

"Oh, for the love of Mike, shut up! "

For these things are in the mind, which begins to work overtime the minute one parts from civilization, calling up terrible visions and by dwelling upon them long enough, making them real. I remember rather vividly my first experience as an emergency doctor.

I had needed a fishing pal. The regular ones had not been on deck and so I had gone down to Denver to recruit one who had expressed a desire, time after time, to get into "God's out of doors." In this particular, there are even folks who live as close to the mountains as Denver, which is sixty-two miles from the crest of the continent, who can do all the things that a man from New York can do. An office plays no favorites. Once it gets a firm hold on a man, it attends to the rest of the details.

We fished hard that day — and it was the first time in his life that Ben, my companion, had ever cast a fly. A good trout rod weighs only five ounces, but five ounces multiplied enough during a day easily become a ton, and the repetition of drawing in that line, then throwing it forth again has its effect upon even the muscles of a practised fly-caster. Ben and I came back to camp at dark. We cooked our evening meal, and the usual meal of the man who camps out light is salt meat, fish, bread and

coffee, together with what canned goods he has lugged along. Then, under the pup tent, we rolled into our blankets for sleep.

Hours passed. Midnight came and went. Then early dawn, and with it a poke in the ribs.

"Coop!" came an agonized voice. "Coop! For God's sake, wake up!"

"Huh? Whasmatter?"

"Wake up! Wake up! I've been bitten, and it's pain-  
ing me clear up to my shoulder!"

This time there was no further questioning. There was sagebrush in this country, and some 'dobe. There *might* be a rattlesnake. The flashlight gleamed, and I faced Ben, one hand supporting the injured arm. Then with anxious eyes, I looked for the tiny mark of that marvelously constructed hypodermic needle known as a rattlesnake's fang. But there was none. I felt for swelling, or evidence of coagulation. That also was missing. Ben groaned and gnashed his teeth, and swung his head from side to side, and implored me for God's sake to do something. But all I could do was ask questions.

"Were you awake when he bit you?"

"No — the pain of it woke me up. Oh, Coop! To think of a thing like this, miles from a doctor. Can't you do something?"

"Yes, if I can find the blamed bite, I can cut it and get out the poison. But how the devil can I fix it when I can't see where he bit you? Where does it hurt most?"

"Oh, everywhere; clear into my shoulder blade."

"Where else? Isn't there a stinging?"

"Stinging?" Ben stared. "Does it sting?"

"Of course it does. Like a bee — only worse."

That worried Ben. Evidently this didn't sting. I sought for just what it *was* doing. He thought that over.

"It itches, Coop. Right there."

"Where? "

"Right there. There — right there."

"Well, get your hand away; stop rubbing it like that. Do you want to massage the stuff through your whole —." Then I halted — and cussed. Cussed as only one friend can cuss another when his heart and liver have been turned over with fright. "Well, you poor sap! You — you — know what's wrong with you? "

"No. What's wrong with me? Was it a scorpion? "

"Scorpion my eye! That's a mosquito bite. Isn't it? Look at it close — if you can find it again. And the rest of it is muscle-ache from swinging that fishing rod all day! "

Whereupon Ben looked his arm over, found the mosquito bite, put some wet salt on it to kill the acidity of its sting, rubbed his shoulder, and then a man who five minutes before was dying from the poison of a rattlesnake, Gila monster, scorpion, tarantula, or something else which is supposed to be terribly deadly, flopped down into his blanket again and snored until bright sun-up. Such is often the calamity of the hills.

And of course there was good ground for Ben's beliefs, because there should be in the hills only those things that one expects to find there, and nothing that one has forgotten about, such as mosquitoes. There's nothing more disappointing to the regulation picture of God's out of doors than insects. Such as red-headed ants, which take hold and refuse to let go; or gnats which rise in swarms about one, and simply love to linger. But of all the disillusionments, the mosquito is the worst.

Somehow, folks from the lower country just know that there aren't any mosquitoes in the mountains. It's too high for them. Back home, for instance, when one wants to get away from the mosquitoes, he goes up on a hill, where the breeze has a good play, and in this position of height is clear of the pests. Therefore, if one can ascend a medium-sized hill and be free of humming visitors, think how inviolable the Rocky Mountains must be, rising majestically from five to fourteen thousand feet above the sea. The truth is a little different, for the Rocky Mountains are exactly like the rest of the United States. There are places where one doesn't see a mosquito from year to year. Then there are other places, like a certain memorable stretch of timber on the trail to Trapper's Lake and at an altitude close to twelve thousand feet, where one may gently lay his hand on his horse's neck, press it hard, then raise it, red with blood from the mosquitoes he has killed! The same is true of ants, gnats and other forms of insect life. Altitude doesn't bother them much. They seem to know that being in God's out of doors without them wouldn't be quite complete, and they're right on the job, at least until the sun goes down. After that, as a rule, it gets a bit too chilly for insects smaller than large miller months and similar flies to be abroad. And unless one deliberately pitches his camp on an ant hill, he's free of trouble. With the exception, of course, of rattlesnake mosquitoes. But then, there's even a consolation about them. They don't seem to carry the poison germs that are prevalent in lower countries.

Incidentally, in this regard, the mountaineer carries little medicine. Often he has a small vial of iodine, a container of subnitrate of bismuth, for an antiseptic powder, a roll of two-inch bandage, a roll of inch adhesive, and a

package of asperin tablets; he needs little else. The injuries of the hills are usually nothing more than the skinning of knuckles, which will heal of themselves. Sometimes one will catch a slight cold which one asperin tablet will cure, and beyond that, a person's own system does most of the work through elimination. Granting, of course, that a man can make his mind behave, and not conjure up illnesses which do not exist.

After two or three days in the open, it's the usual case to find the newcomer suffering from everything from pleurisy on, up and down, and thinking up excuses by which to get back to town. Of course, there are hardened city men, just as there are weak mountaineers, men who have been getting out regularly ever since they were boys, and to whom an excursion into the open is merely a means of keeping fit. This naturally is not for them; except as a reminder of their own experiences as guides, tutors and general guardians. It is for the man who spends the year from one end to the other in an office — and his name is legion — and who, sooner or later, yields to the savage, he-man impulse surging within him to get right out and live next to the heart of Nature. Of course, if that man spends an hour or so a day in religious effort at the athletic club, or if he is a seasoned handball, baseball or tennis player, well and good. His muscles are sufficiently attuned to violent exercises to adapt themselves rapidly to other endeavors. The golf player doesn't come in this category; there seems to be a difference, somehow, between treading the fairway and hoofing it along a mountain trail. And if one is not accustomed to a certain violence of endeavor and a peace of mind under all circumstances, a good way to rough it would be to read about it; or to take his roughing in smoother doses, such as a camping

trip along an automobile highway, with the rough part of it consisting of going three days without a shave. There's nothing much left of roughness in the average motor camp of to-day; what with cots, compact cooking and eating kits, down-filled sleeping bags and the rest of the equipment, it's a fairly easy matter to be quite free from the aches and pains of discomfort.

For the man of the office, this is the life. Not the other. For there are things which suit all persons, and the human body doesn't take changes all too readily. As for instance, I, who have been writing of the city man who goes to the mountain to rough it, I, who, when the winter comes on and I hie back to the city, suffer for three days from a bursting headache, caused by the noise, and am lame for a week from walking on cement sidewalks!

## CHAPTER V

### TENDERFOOT!

A SHOWMAN friend and myself sat one day atop the white-painted corral fence which contained the bulldogging steers, watching the bucking horse contest of the annual rodeo at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Out in the dusty arena, dirt-smearred ear-downers and horse wranglers were endeavoring to persuade wild-eyed murderers in the shape of equines to assume the command of a hackamore and the more resented weight of a contest saddle. Looping broncs sailed and sunfished, yielding in defeat at the crack of the judge's revolver, or bouncing their riders gently upon their craniums while the motor ambulance clanged down the race track and the surgeons in the emergency tent got out the restoratives and prepared for the setting of broken bones.

"Good show," I said.

The circus man nodded.

"Yep. Some of the boys from my outfit in it. Figured they might as well lay off from the circus and make a few dollars while we were playing the Death Trail." Then with a sudden change of subject, he pointed to a modishly attired man among the mounted spectators. "See that bird in the white pants? Hero of Gallopin' Italy or whatever it was. Hardest boiled cookie I ever met in my life. Came on the show a few weeks ago and outrode every cowhand I had. They tell me that when they got a tough baby of a horse in the British army, he'd take it out and

either bust it or bust the saddle trying. That's him, over there with the slick riding boots, and the white pants on. And just on account of that," he grinned, shrugged his shoulders and lit a cigarette, "out here in the free and untrammelled West, where men are mendacious, I suppose you'd call him a tenderfoot."

Maybe. More probably not. There happen to be some qualifications to this tenderfoot matter as it is recognized to-day. True, there was a time in the West, particularly in the Rocky Mountain region, when, arriving footsore and weary after having walked all the way from the Missouri River in the expectancy of seeing free gold protruding from every foot of the Rockies, newcomers were called tenderfeet, regardless of their past qualifications. There was a reason for it. Despite the origin of the name elsewhere, it meant in the gold regions a green, gullible fool, who had sufficiently believed the wild stories which had permeated the eastern country to make a six-hundred-mile journey on foot in the hope of finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, with the result that about all he discovered was the pot itself, full of beans, at a dollar a dish. Given a country filled with men like that, and a term soon springs into derisive and popular usage, even among those who but yesterday were tenderfeet themselves. But times have changed since Jackson found gold in '59, and started the real rush to the Rockies.

Clothing, for one thing, is not the mark of the man that it once was. Of course, there's the natural derision regarding those bulbous tourist ladies who equip themselves in cute little khaki breeches with enough room on each side for a couple of watermelons, silk hose, a pair of worn-out high-heeled shoes, a round hat which insults a well-known make of car by using its name, and to touch off

the scene, a natty little motor veil in a continual contest with the hair as to which can outstraggle the other. But that isn't because of a feeling of aloofness; it's merely humorous that any one should get the idea that dressing in that fashion would add to the attraction of the outdoors. Because, strange as it may seem, to a real Westerner, there's nothing that's really so comforting as a bit of the sport when it comes to the right kind of clothes.

Late the other night my doorbell rang. Unusual, since my town out near the top of the Rockies happens to be one of those affairs commonly described as "nestling", and the process is usually in full swing by nine o'clock. I found on the veranda a snow-burned cow-puncher friend from forty miles over the range, who'd taken a notion that day that he wanted to see me, and had consumed the rest of the time on horseback and in crossing the Continental Divide, breaking snow trail for fifteen miles of the way, sometimes through drifts belly deep on his horse. He was dressed typically: hair pants, ragged red sweater, with a sheepskin coat on top of that, cowhide boots, filagreed gauntlets, and all the rest of the habiliments which go along with a first class cow chaperon.

"Got a mighty tired hoss out here," he said. "That old willer-tail that I've been using for packin' drug back on th' halter rope all day long. I'll go down to the liv'ry stable, put 'em up, get squared aroun' a little myself, an' then I'll be back."

In an hour or so he got "squared around", and the doorbell rang again. This time, it was a different looking cow-puncher. The chaps had disappeared, to give way to smartly cut military academy riding breeches. His shirt was linen and his collar exactly the kind which makes men

look so handsome from their position just above the straps in the subway. He wore puttees and well-matched shoes extending from them. And were it not for his wind-tanned and snow-burned features, the peculiar shade of his eyes — blue eyes take on a peculiar, lightish hue after years in the open — his strong hands and his natural drawl, he might have been any one in the world. What the well-dressed cow-puncher should wear, it seems, is largely a matter of taste and how much opportunity he is going to have for showing off that apparel. But one thing is certain. As a rule, he is not going to spend much time strolling down city streets in a ten-gallon hat and high-heeled boots. That is, east of Denver.

But, of course, you've seen them in every part of the United States. Boots stuffed outside tight-legged trousers, gauntlets over their coat sleeves, and beneath that coat a bucking-horse belt of variegated hand-carving. The kind of a cow-puncher who walks along in proud disdain of the glances which are shied at him in every direction, as though he didn't know there was such a thing as curiosity. The only trouble is that he isn't a cow-puncher. He's a contest hand. There's a difference.

He is a showman. From early spring until late autumn, he is in the contest arena, fighting for "day" and prize money in the various contests, or with the Wild West department of a circus. In isolated cases, it happens that he has had no schooling whatever in regulation ranch life, having begun his existence with a circus or around rodeo fields, gradually learning the tricks of the trade and graduating into a roper or a rider or bulldogger. One need not be born in Idaho or Montana or Colorado to learn to swing a rope, or gain the foolhardiness necessary to leap from the back of a horse to the horns of a plunging steer and

argue it into reclining upon the rodeo track within a given number of seconds. More than a few good rodeo hands have come from New Jersey and Pennsylvania and New York. And to the regulation, mild-mannered, bashful cow-puncher, slinking out of the limelight whenever it's possible unless he's in his own element down at the shindig in the community house, the professional is an object of some derision. Just as the regulation cow-puncher is derided by the contest hand. There's a gulf of considerable width between them. They don't live the same lives at all. The contest hand is the theatrical overflow of cowboydom. To those who later desire to follow the same sort of life, he naturally forms the same attraction that the prima donna does to the aspirant for the chorus. But for the ordinary ranchman, working in irrigation ditches when he isn't personally accompanying cows, and occupied with his big labor during the spring branding, or the fall shove-down; doing a little haying and what not during the summer months, and forking innumerable tons of alfalfa during the long, feeding months of winter, there isn't much of this stuff that you read about in books. When a horse bucks, he takes it out of him and is glad when it's over. The other man fights bucking horses as a matter of his daily livelihood. One is a ranch hand and the other is a show hand, and it is the show hand whom the ordinary person of the ordinary city usually sees. The real cow-hand is that red-faced person, dressed like any one else, walking over close to the buildings, with his hands in his pockets, and a vague stare in his eyes when somebody asks him the way to the post-office. The other man is on the outside of the sidewalk where everybody can see him, and he knows nearly as much about the town as the native.

For he has the innate knowledge of the showman, and the benefit of travel.

Yet each serves his purpose. One raises cattle and says little about it. The other shows exactly how life in the free and untrammelled West is lived, in constant recurrences of bucking hosses, bulldogging and similar activities. It makes a great show, and it is a true combination of what may happen at one time or another upon a ranch. But as a picture of everyday existence, of course, it bears the same relation to true, regulation ranch life that Nick Carter does to the United States Secret Service. Therein lies the difference between the true cowman and the contest hand. The former calls the latter a grandstanding showman, and the latter calls the former a poor sap who doesn't know any better than to fork hay for a living. For that matter, neither existence is easy. The showman's life is an affair which may end abruptly any day, in death or in permanent injury, for it is true that he runs terrific risks every time he enters the contest arena. A wild-eyed, smoke-blowing Brahma steer which doesn't desire to be bulldogged is not particular how much it mistreats the gentleman who is trying to twist its horns into a pretzel. Neither is it a simple affair to go alone, except for one's mount and a pack horse, through snow-drifted country in search of a bunch of lost "critters", staying awake most of the night to keep from freezing, and perhaps being lost in a blizzard from three days to a week. The only real difference being, of course, that the showman gives a picture of the ranch that doesn't exactly exist. Whenever an Easterner shows himself upon a stretch of land bigger than a garden patch, he thinks he's going to be laughed at unless he announces immediately that he

wants 'em to bring out Old Satan and all the rest of the outlaws and that he'll ride 'em, with a hackamore, one hand free, taped spurs and scratching at every jump, just like they do at Old Cheyenne.

With the result that on more than one ranch a new custom is being established. Contrary to general belief, there's no fun, especially when one happens to live thirty or forty miles from the nearest railroad, town or doctor, in forcing a person whose muscles are not equal to the strain into an attempt at riding a vicious, man-hating, and oft-times man-destructive horse, with the attendant danger of serious injury. Western humor of the present day may not yet have reached the doubtful finesse of Broadway, but it's hardly that crude. With the result that when somebody announces a fervent desire to show how courageous he can be, and emits loud appeals for "Ole Satan", it's generally handed to him in the shape of a pitchfork and an excursion into the nearest field of alfalfa that lies mown, awaiting stacking. Riding a bucking horse may be more spectacular. But a pitchfork, after a few hours, is harder on the sticking qualities, especially if the soil is sandy and there's a sprinkling of pigweed, the spines of which sift through gloves and clothing, into shoes and down one's back. In addition, it has the benefit of hardening muscles which one needs hardened, energizing the liver and increasing the appetite without any more harm than a few days of soreness.

In fact, there seem to be a number of myths about what status the well-informed tenderfoot should occupy. The usual misconception is that a tenderfoot is a tenderfoot, no matter how long he may remain in a country — a sort of brand, as it were, never to be erased. And it is true, in some cases. There are persons who begin as tenderfeet and end

the same way. There are others who never are tenderfeet, in spite of the fact that they may have come from the exact surroundings of the aforementioned weakling. All for the reason that the proposition of being a tenderfoot isn't an affair of the physique. It lies almost wholly in the mind!

In the first place, there's little to learn. If one desires to become a cow-puncher, he can develop the muscles needed to sit on the back of a horse, or to throw a rope, in a summer; the human body happens to be a marvelously fast worker, if it is given even a fair physique on which to start. Whether he ever becomes a shark of a rider or a marvel of a roper depends entirely upon his natural capabilities, just as there are good and bad arithmeticians; I know a Yale student who earns his summer money wrangling horses for a dude ranch outfit. If he has eyes, he can learn how to read brands. If he'll watch the other fellow, he'll see that there are tricks about forking hay, and about puddling in an irrigation ditch.

The same is true of him who desires to become a mountaineer. If he learns to make camp, how to handle himself on grades, how to get out of country where he might otherwise be lost, and a few other little knickknacks, he's comparatively well-fitted for the hills. And if he wants to homestead in the flat, sage country, he learns how to grub and burn brush, conserve his money as much as possible by doing his own canning in season instead of depending upon the grocery store forty miles away, to walk on skis or snowshoes, and to garner the usual knowledge that any farmer should know. There doesn't seem to be any post-graduate course, or even an outlined elementary one. The whole thing depends upon two elements; his natural adaptability, and whether he likes the life and the country.

There are few places where the mind plays a greater part in happiness or lack of it than in the West.

It's a different country, even different within its own boundaries. A few years ago, a forest ranger who had spent practically all his working life in the Pike National Forest, in Colorado, was transferred to another district, near Great Falls, Montana. He had learned his woodcraft in the Colorado Rockies, where timber line is rarely less than ten thousand five hundred feet above sea level, and where it's the right and proper thing, when lost, to find a stream and follow it downward, being fairly sure of finding human habitation sooner or later. But when he got to Montana, and began to talk of eleven thousand and twelve thousand feet above sea level as being timber line, they merely stared at him. It averaged only about eight thousand feet there. And as for following a stream when one is lost, — that didn't seem to be done in Montana and Idaho. Far better in that land of impenetrable cañons to stick to the ridges.

So it goes. A different country, a strange country. Riotously beautiful by day, when the blue of the sage flats stretches for miles, with the hazy blue of the hills in the distance, or the gaunt majesty of the mountains asserts itself in coloration, in lashing waterfalls and tangled débris of ancient deadfalls. Weirdly interesting at night, after the sun has dropped like a plummet and then, due to the reflective qualities of the high ranges, held its real burst of sundown splendor in the east, instead of the west, where it really should be. When darkness comes without the soft blendings familiar to lower altitudes, and the hills that had shown themselves distinctly a short time before are now only gray, misty ghosts in the diffused light of the stars. And where those stars themselves con-



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FOR THE TOURIST A COWBOY GUIDE IS  
SUGGESTED



tain far more luminosity, owing to the rarefied clearness of the atmosphere than in climes that are nearer sea level, and seem weirdly close sometimes.

A bunch of us went fishing up on the North Platte, in Wyoming, late in the trout season. It should have been just the right time, according to all the indications which we'd studied so carefully: dark of the moon, low water and all that. But with the perverseness which is a part of trout nature, the Rainbow steadily, thoroughly, and absolutely refused to bite.

The last day or so came, and a wild-eyed party of fishermen talked it over. If the trout weren't biting in daylight, then they must be biting at night. So in that space of time allowed by law following sundown we decided to try the lure of big flies, in the hope that the trout were feeding on miller moths which came forth at dusk. The theory was correct.

We split up, each to our favorite fishing hole, each far away from the other in that jealousy which all fishermen possess. Strange, but a trout angler can personally make all the noise and do all the wrong things he cares to without noticing it much. He can slap around in the water like a Mississippi side-wheeler. He can run his flatboat over a riffle, get out, slip on a mossy rock, fall into the stream, scramble to his feet again, and begin casting his fly in perfect equanimity, feeling quite sure that the particular trout of which he is desirous is going to stay right there, set like a sprinter, to leap at his fly when he casts it within range. But let some other fellow try the same thing!

So we scattered, a half-mile or so apart, in the gathering darkness. It was rattlesnake country; the camp was Rattlesnake Roost and one of the blamed things had been killed that afternoon only about a hundred yards from

our blankets, a feeling not conducive to comfort when floundering about along the shores of a river, without much caution as to where one is stepping. Not that the rattlesnake is the fabled thing that it is supposed to be, lying in wait, jaws open, to kill anybody within reach. Nor that it is the sure death that it is catalogued; the alcoholic remedies administered are credited with having killed more persons than the bites. But neither is it pleasant to have a natural hypodermic needle full of coagulative poison shoved into one when what one really wants is a three or four pound Rainbow trout.

So there was naturally a skittish feeling as I went to my particular fishing hole. A feeling which increased; far-away country has that way about it. Two hundred yards distant, a ruffle mumbled, talking of strange things which only it could understand. In the great, filmy bluffs across the stream, where the swallow nests appeared by day like the plasterings of some boy with a mud-dauber, things moved and whispered and loosened tiny particles of limestone which rattled downward in disconcerting fashion. Anything is eerie when one can't catalogue it. Then on an island of cottonwood and tangled willows, a hoot owl began the nightly queries of the moonless night. And just about that moment, I looked before me and saw the almost indiscernable shadow of a man on the water.

"Gone cuckoo!" I grumbled. The habit of talking to oneself comes easily in lonely places. "How 'm I going to cast a shadow when there isn't any moon?"

But the shadow was there. I pushed out an arm in an oratorical gesture. So did the shadow.

"Cuckoo as a humming bird!" I announced to the night, to the grumbling of those eerie voices from the

rifle, and to the hoot owl. "Plain daft. How can I make a shadow?" But I could. There it was. I cast my fly in the middle of it, just to be sure it would disappear with the disturbance of the water. It did. I moved upstream. So did the shadow, for here was still water, stretching for a half-mile against a bluff. At last it entered my head to look over my shoulder. And there was the planet Mars, shining with enough brilliancy in this clear-aired country to cast my reflection in the water.

Strange country! New country! A country which cannot be met halfway. Either one loves it with all the affection that a person can pour upon a land, or he breaks the speed records getting out of it. Or stays there like a man in a penitentiary. In nothing is this more exemplified than in the treatment of tuberculosis.

A long time ago, some one started the rumor that all one had to do to "beat the bugs" was to go to an altitudinous country, with the result that unfortunates flocked there like gold seekers to a new bonanza. Some of them got well. Some of them, less seriously ill, turned up their toes and died. The country was just the same for all of them. But their minds were different, and it was their minds which dictated to a large extent just how much efficacy the clear air and sunshine would possess. For him who hated the country, that air and sunshine were worth about two whoops in Hades. For him who loved it, there was new life in every breath!

One of the toughest persons I ever followed on a mountain trail had a habit of reaching the place where the grade was heaviest, then settling down to his job like a stocky-legged horse, and pulling the ascent until one began to wonder whether he was a human being or a human fly. He had the endurance of a team of mules, the ability

to sleep upon the ground with the placidity of a baby in a crib, and to hang to the task of catching a trout in spite of fire, flood, pestilence or disaster, his favorite diversion being to forget his sheepskin, then sit out on a raft for four or five hours in a driving June snowstorm at twelve thousand feet altitude, and call it fun. Yet the first time I saw him, he lay, a wan, gasping being, upon a cot under the flap of a tent upon the top of Flirtation Peak, placed there by his doctor on the gamble of whether he'd live or die. And he lived.

Lived because the brilliancy of his eyes was due to something else than fever. Because everywhere he looked he saw wonderful things — like fairy tales come true. Back in the past he'd been a piano player in one of those two-by-four affairs along Broadway in New York, where all one sees is the sheet of music that the prospective customer shoves in front of him. Contrary to tradition, he hadn't liked it so well. He'd longed for the open country, for the freedom of something besides a place between four walls, most of which was taken up by the piano. And when, almost a corpse from tuberculosis, he had gained the money to go West, the cure started almost before they'd helped him on the train. Because he'd forgotten health for the moment. All he could think of was the country he was going to, and how he would love it.

The love held good. There were pictures in every beetling cliff, books in the tumbling little waterfall that ran from the reservoir above town, dramas in the herd of elk which sometimes roamed within the city limits, epics in the gaunt burn-overs of an ancient day, faintly visible from his cot atop Flirtation Peak. He loved it, he worshipped it, and while his mind was busy forgetting his physical state, that physical state righted itself — and

that was the end of that. Another man, up there in all that loneliness, with nothing to look at but a bunch of mountains, might have died. It all depended upon the mental attitude.

And that is exactly what makes or breaks a tenderfoot — the mind. There's nothing else necessary, except a fairly standard physique, and even the lack of that can be overcome. If a person is an ordinary human being, all he has to do is to learn the few laws of the land, develop a love for exercise, and he's a Westerner. Some do it, figuratively speaking, overnight. Some never do; their minds won't let them. There are too many bugaboos, the primary one of which is fear — the fear of exercise.

Just why exercise should be supposed to have direful results upon an ordinary person who isn't organically doomed is rather past comprehension. But it is so. I know a man who went to a dozen doctors in New York to find out what was wrong with him. At last one was quite frank. He was suffering from a terrific complication of diseases known as Lack of Exercise. Whereupon he went home to his suburban place, mowed the lawn, was sick for a week from the exertion, and changed doctors again. The same thing holds true in many another human mind. Exercise is something that's just waiting around the corner to commit murder, when in truth, the poor old maligned condition wants only to accomplish one thing — to aid a much-abused physique. Once that feeling is sufficiently inculcated in a human brain, it's wonderful what a person can endure without suffering any really serious effects.

A dozen years or so ago, Colonel William Frederick Cody, Buffalo Bill, with whom I happened to be connected, decided that he wanted to enter the motion-picture business. So a company was formed, all of Buffalo Bill's

old Indian fighting friends were summoned, and with a company of generals, cavalry, motion-picture cameras, a few thousand Sioux Indians, interpreters, old-time scouts, and Johnny Baker, foster son of Buffalo Bill as a sort of major-domo, we repaired to Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to put into film form the story of the last Indian rebellion, when, fired by a shortage of food and the trip of Short Bull to the supposed Messiah at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, the Sioux put on "bullet proof" ghost shirts, and decided to lick the whole United States army. A part of the action called for scenes in the Bad Lands, seventy-two miles from the camp on Wounded Knee Creek, and a portion of the outfit moved there; Buffalo Bill and his generals and press agent in a wagon, the troops on horseback, and Johnny Baker, with the cameras and camera men in a brakeless buckboard, drawn by army mules.

The pictures were taken. During the action, a trooper was hurt, and it was necessary, when return time came, to carry him in the wagon with Buffalo Bill and the generals. That left the press agent seeking a spot whereon to ride. He swerved in the direction of his old-time friend, Johnny Baker.

It happened, however, that Johnny had been awake most of the night as the result of ptomaine poisoning. It happened also that one of the army generals had, the night before, read a governmental report which stated that seventeen members of an Arizona garrison had been bitten by skunks and thereby developed hydrophobia. Whereupon, Colonel Cody had thought the matter over, remembered that he'd seen a good many skunks in the Bad Lands in '71, handed the press agent a shotgun and told him to sit at the entrance of the tent that night and keep away any possible intruders. Neither the ptomaine

nor the skunks had been conducive to good tempers. So the press agent approached rather abruptly the subject of his return to Pine Ridge.

"I'll have to have a place on that buckboard," he said.

"You will, will you?" asked Johnny. "How are you going to have a place on here when the thing's overloaded already? And when there aren't any brakes on it — and twenty miles of down hill? Besides those army mules, wanting to run away every time we hit a grade?"

"I don't care about that," growled the press agent. "I'm going to ride on this buckboard."

"Oh, are you?" Friendship, for the time being, had departed. Johnny Baker wiggled a finger in emphasis. "You know what you're going to do? I'm running this shebang. And I say there's no more room on this buckboard. See that horse over there, don't you?" He pointed to the mount of the injured trooper, "Well, there's your ride back to town."

The press agent said nothing. In the first place, he was of that breed of men sometimes looked upon as queer, who wasn't especially inclined toward horses. A rather mad career as a boy, in the company of a wild-eyed murderer in the shape of a racing horse, had rather cured him of any sentimental notions regarding man's best friend. As a result, he had not sat astride a saddle for six years, and then only for a ride of a mile or so.

But he had been reared in the West and to a life of exercise. He knew that he wasn't going to be killed, even though he might be beautifully blistered.

"All right," he snapped. "I'll ride the old horse!"

And he did. Soft from six years' unacquaintanceship with the saddle — and that means softness of back muscles, knee tendons, leg muscles, shoulder muscles,

and a number of other things besides the mere portion of the anatomy which touches leather — he swung into the saddle, loped his horse when he could to make the bounces easier, made up for that by walking his mount to rest it, covered those seventy-two miles, arriving far in the van of the rest of the outfit, rolled off his mount almost a solid blister from his waist to the calves of his legs, and flopped into bed. But it didn't kill him. He was even able to wobble out into a blizzard the next morning and, the quarrel forgotten, proclaim his joy that he hadn't come with Johnny after all, since that being had fought snow and sleet and a raging wind for twenty miles, and literally fallen out of the buckboard a living sheet of ice. In fact, after the soreness had departed, the press agent thought it over, decided that all horses weren't so bad, and has indulged in the healthful exercise a great deal since. But it might have been another story if every ache in his back had meant pleurisy, every cramp in his chest a symptom of pneumonia from exposure following a sleepless night, every breaking of a blister and galling of flesh against his clothing a sure forerunner of blood poisoning. It's usually those things that are most terrible, the things which rarely happen. There's hardly a man in the world who's really a coward, until his mind begins working.

That's usually the stumbling block — fear. Fear of what people will say. Fear that hardened Westerners will laugh at a poor sap from the East. Fear of a strange country, which, after all, must be a pretty fair land, since folks insist upon living in it. Fear of initiation, of unaccustomed things, when all that is necessary is to let the mind resign itself to the realization that this is a country where exercise is a paramount thing, and that this exer-

cise is far more often helpful than otherwise. And that it is an active land is perhaps best illustrated by what is, of course, an extraordinary instance, but true nevertheless:

Not so long ago, I went up to see old Jesse Randall, who came out to the gold country when every mining town had its Hotel de Paris, and the nuggets lay on the roulette tables in scoopfuls. When there were two-gun men, and killers and gamblers, and bedizened dance-hall girls; when the hills thronged with Chinese working the placer diggings, and when life ran in the raw.

That was years ago. He's eighty odd now, and they call him the Grand Old Man of country journalism, for he is still the reporter, editor, typesetter, printer, job man, mailing department and janitor of his paper, high up in the mountain gold camp of Georgetown, Colorado. He "covers" the town, and the courthouse and the various happenings of the mines thereabout, and his newspaper plant is swept out by seven o'clock in the morning. But when I saw him, there was a sad glint in his aged eyes, a droop to his aged mouth.

"I'm not able to get around like I used to," he wailed. "Just can't do it; every now and then I miss a good story, just by not circulating like I used to."

"Well," and I strove to put the subject of his advanced age as gently as possible, "a man can't stay young forever."

He looked up innocently.

"Oh, it isn't that," he said. "It isn't that at all. Feeling fine, I am. But you see, my father's living with me now, and in the last few months, he's just gotten awful feeble!"

## CHAPTER VI

### TRAILIN' ALONG

A LETTER came for me one day from the vice president of an oil company up in Wyoming, apologizing for the fact that he hadn't been able to answer sooner a communication which I had addressed to him a couple of months before. He'd felt the confines of his work and his office, he said, and so he'd gathered himself a couple of cow-punchers, a bunch of pack-saddles and a string of horses and hit the trail. Naturally, when one is pounding the hurricane deck of a mountain horse along a filmy line which appears and disappears in the piney stretches of the mountains, when one is away from telegraph and telephone and lines of mail communication, one cannot very well answer letters. So he apologized, and I wrote back to him and told him that it was quite all right. I knew the situation exactly — because I'd just gotten through doing the same thing myself.

Time was, out in the Rocky Mountains, when folks went from place to place by pack outfit because they couldn't go any other way. Now they're beginning to do the same thing again, but for an entirely different purpose. The mountain plug, neglected for years, is again assuming something that faintly resembles a position of importance, for the reason that persons are thinking of him as a mode of travel and not merely as a beast to be turned out on free range to take care of himself as best

he can. Packsaddles that have lain around livery stables for years, robbed of their breechings, of their rings and ropes and breast straps, are slowly becoming refurnished with the habiliments which once adorned them. Seeing the country by pack train is becoming a bit more popular than it was when persons stampeded to the automobiles with their cushions and their speed. The thrill of hitting the trail is becoming more of a sport than it was, especially to those who like to take their outdoors without the immediate juxtaposition of the corner drug store, the movie house, the tourist hotel and the sight-seeing bus, or eat the dust of California tourists who tear up the road in a wild dash to see how quickly they can make it to New York and of New York tourists who are spending their vacations in burning up rubber in an endeavor to break the record to Los Angeles. Trailing is exactly the opposite.

Nor that everybody's doing it. Nor that everybody ever will do it. There are persons who can take a trip by horseback and enjoy every minute of it. There are others who would fare a great deal better with a dish of tea and a lecture on how to know the wild flowers. Hitting the trail with a pack outfit is a strenuous sport, and that is what endears it to one who grows tired sometimes of paved streets and whirring motor cars, and longs for the wide silent places where a man can eat — off the limb of a tree — until a protesting body has finally inured itself to the gentle torture of eight hours a day in the saddle.

But after all, what are a few aches and pains when one has seen an automobile road with its monotony of steady smoothness gradually become more and more rutty until the possibility of a roaring motor has finally faded? When one has watched the resultant wagon highway be-

come less well-defined with every passing ranch house, at last to converge into only one mark of travel instead of two? When the last habitation melts in the distance, as his outfit plods doggedly onward, and the trail itself becomes an uncertain affair, well marked and smooth where the protection of the spruce and pines have sheltered it year after year, as elusive as a coquettish woman where a voracious creek has found it a better mode of travel than its previous bed and the ever industrious beavers have elected to erect a dam where once ran a lane of travel? For then it is that he who travels the hills by pack train feels the thrill for which he has left civilization. The thrill of the primeval, of the unknown, the pitting of himself against the possibilities of being lost, with resultant hours of back-tracking, the thrill of playing a game of hide and seek with Nature and, greatest of all, the selfish knowledge that at last he is in a place where the other fellow doesn't go.

It is the seeking of this thrill that is gradually, year by year, putting more hoofprints upon trails which have lain long unused in the Rocky Mountains; a seeking always of the primeval, of a place where a man can call the world his own.

In it all there is also another ingredient — that of necessity. The outdoors, in its true sense, is rapidly reaching a condition where it soon will have its back to the wall. This chapter, for instance, is being written in a little log cabin beside a blue-green lake which glistens at timber line, while about it are the eternal drifts and glowering crags of the Continental Divide. Over on a tremendous rock slide, the old watchman of the ground hog family which inhabits the crevices is piping his announcement that smoke is coming from my chimney and



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THE BURRO AS A BEAST OF BURDEN IS  
RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING



SWAMPS, BOGS OR ROCK SLIDES—IT'S ALL  
THE SAME TO A PACK TRAIN



that it might be well for every self-respecting ground hog to keep a weather eye out for humans. Here and there upon the lake there is the splash and instantaneous glint of silver as a trout rises for a fly. The wind moans along the edges of the ancient building, still sheltering at its north end the remainder of the drift which covered it from October until June. The bent, misshapen trees along the water edge twist and writhe with the whining wind, sweeping ceaselessly from the pinnacles above. It is a place of wildness, of aloofness; off in the deadfalls, the horses which panted and frothed with the ardors of the climb to this place of heights are making their daily assault upon the succulent bunches of timber-line grasses, their chain hobbles rattling eerily with their every movement. A place away from the world, at the top of the world, but the wind carries with it from over the range the sound of blasting; boom after boom and shot after shot, as a road gang fights steadily at its rock work, traveling onward, steadily onward into virgin territory, that another frontier may fall and more automobiles go where automobiles never before have been.

That is why, for the cow-puncher, for the mountaineer, for the genuine sportsman, and even for the tourist who is sufficiently inured to take his outdoors straight, the automobile is losing a bit of its popularity in the West. Far better the horse, and a pack animal dragging back on the halter rope, while ahead runs the dim trail, leading the way into places where the trees bear only the welcomed notch and slash of some forest ranger, and an equally welcome lack of the carved names and addresses of visitors from Alabama or Kansas or Kalamazoo, together with the date of the visit, to say nothing of the garage signs, gasoline signs, tire signs, clothing signs, and

the best hated sign of all, the one that cautions you carefully that there's a picture just ahead. There's nothing like that upon the trail, whether it be one of the Forest Service, carefully swamped out, trimmed of brush and with tiny bridges at the creek crossings, or the faded thing where your future is a gamble from the time you hit it until you've reached your destination. There are trails and trails, just as there are roads and roads, and for him who seeks the different sensations of a pack trip there awaits about anything one may desire. But given the necessary maps — and one can be flooded with them by a mere application at the nearest Forest Service office — a general knowledge of mountains and how to respect them, a bunch of good horses, a compass and a large consignment of common sense, one can do almost inconceivable things in getting from place to place. Even when one has never been even within hailing distance of the country he is to go through.

For instance, my camping partner, Jack Nankervis, and myself, recently talked things over. Our horses had just gone to pasture after a journey of a thousand miles in the high country, and we were taking stock of what had happened. In those thousand miles, we had crossed the Continental Divide fourteen times by trail, by disused wagon road and by main strength and awkwardness where there was no other means of passage; we had hit blizzards and snow-drifted passes where we had shoveled trenches for forty, even fifty feet that our horses might flounder through; we had roped horses out of creeks and picked them up after sickening plunges down rock slides and mountain sides; we had fought the slimy uncertainties of quicksand, the cross-logged puzzles of dead-fall stretches that seemingly would never end; we had

floundered through bogs and called our compass a liar a thousand times upon sagebrush mesas which stretched for leagues without a landmark; we had followed the twistings and writhings of the backbone of the continent as it squirmed like a wounded serpent from east to west and from north and south to east and west again; we had even been lost a baker's dozen times, but out of the entire trip of a thousand miles, we had not back-tracked a total of more than a mile and a half! We had continued to progress, even when we were lost, for to the man who can use common sense, there seems always a way around if he'll only take the time to think it out.

In fact, being lost in the mountains amounts to about what one wants to make of it. For the man who can look upon it in nothing but a tragic and excitable light, the best thing to do is to stay on the beaten track where there are signs and smooth highways and filling stations and hotels. Either that or hang only to government trails, in the protection of a seasoned guide who has been that way before and who can be depended upon to know what he's doing. For when one strikes out upon strange trails, often not even shown upon the maps, something's going to happen that isn't in the schedule. And it's usually a halt in the pack train, a survey of the country, a consultation and the announcement:

"Well, we've gone and done it again. Lost! "

Whereupon, to the initiated, there is no excitement, no panic, no hasty skirmishing here and there. Instead, there's usually a generous consignment of cuss words, a survey for a camping spot, a half holiday for the horses and a fishing spree for the members of the party that wasn't down on the books. For the main idea when one is lost in the mountains is to thoroughly and effectually

forget the fact until a later hour when things can be considered in the light of complete calmness. And about the time that hour arrives, one finds that he isn't lost at all! But there is danger indeed in the opposite course!

We were pounding the hills, on the last lap of a slowly ending journey. Higher and higher we climbed along the last of the ridges; another thousand yards and we struck the downgrade which would bring tired men and tired horses to the comfort and rest of home. Behind us glowered the Continental Divide, vicious and snowy and ominous, bearing with it the memories of shivering blasts, of twisted lodgepoles tangled across the rutty grades of ancient Rollins Pass and giving way before the blows of our axes only that the free stretches beyond might lead to more mazes, seemingly insurmountable; of tumbling streams where once a trail had been, or rocky stretches where the horses had scrambled like maddened things against the terrific handicaps of grade and insecure footing; of bogs and beaver dams and marsh holes; of the usual penalties of crossing a mountain barrier by anything except an established road. To the right frowned the terrific stretches of James Peak, with a thin line across one end where in ancient days the Utes had traveled from one side of the Rockies to the other, a trail even more difficult than the one which we had traversed, and we glanced toward it with something of relief that we'd had enough sense to take another course. After that, the matter was forgotten; the last tough pull was over, and we were homeward bound.

Not so with the horses. Tired they were, moving with steps which seemed to disjoint their bodies, to say nothing of having the same effect upon their riders. Loggy, with the fatigue of deadened muscles; no longer

did a touch of the spurs bring the old cow-pony walk to "Spot", my pinto, usually mounted on the fly and with an obsession for breaking speed records. The pack horses dragged on their halter ropes, even on the downgrade; now and then they groaned with the agony of heavy loads pressing cruelly upon sore backs. Tired, dog tired from the steady piling up of hundreds and hundreds of miles of continued effort — but suddenly their heads raised. Their ears turned from the trail, and Jack and I reached for our sidearms.

Perhaps a welcome "attack" from a black bear — one with hams just the right size for frying. Perhaps — we were in lion country, and there were evidences of a sheep herd having passed through recently. We raised in our saddles, hands on our holsters, watching, hopeful. But nothing appeared. Only the withered arms of the writhing junipers, twisted from unceasing winds, only the lichen-speckled rocks, and the screaming of a ptarmigan, hurrying from its protection in a rock slide that it might live up to its name of "Fool Hen" and bring itself into plain relief. At last Jack's gun slid back into its usual position under his left arm. He nodded.

"Men," he announced, as he reached for his glasses and raised them to his eyes, "over there on Twin Flats. They're picking up something."

That night in town we met them, Bill Harvey, the sheriff of Clear Creek County, and Dick Pearce, the undertaker. They'd been up on Twin Flats that afternoon, gathering the coyote-cleaned bones of an Eastern man who, two years before, had looked upon the condition of being lost as something to become frenzied about, and who had died as a result of his panic.

As we heard of it, we couldn't help but think of an

afternoon in the Cebolla country of Southern Colorado, when after having followed a perfectly plain trail, it suddenly had ended in a mass of beaver dams, to be skirted and to show on the other side a faint line through high grasses where game had been wont to come down from the higher hills for water. The trail which we had followed rose steadily upon the sidehill, at last to disappear, leaving us with our choice between the willowy tangles of the bed of a creek, and the uncertain footings of rock silt, where the slides had halted. We chose the latter that we might still follow upward the course of the creek — for we were working toward a divide — and have the advantage of height which we would not have possessed had we stuck to the willows. A mile went by, in precarious progress; once a pack horse stumbled, scrambled wildly and saved himself just in time to prevent a drop of some forty feet to the bottom of the slide rock. At last the sidehill began to flatten out; soon we were in a little valley, fringed with pines and filled with heavy grass. Jack cocked his head. I nodded. The pack string headed toward the nearest group of pines. We unpacked quite jovially, hobbled our horses and turned them loose. We set up our camp. Then we got out our fishing rods and quite perfunctorily went to whipping the stream. Late that evening, when he was cleaning the fish, Charlie, our horse wrangler, looked up from his work and grinned.

“You sure knowed where to pick a fishin’ spot,” he said. Jack shrugged his shoulders.

“You mean we know enough to stop when we’re lost.”

That was exactly what had happened. We were lost, thoroughly and effectually. Somewhere, down there at those beaver dams, we had taken the wrong trail, to be

led into stretches of country which we had encompassed without injury once, but might not be able to do again; a trail is often far more difficult of passage from one side than it is from the other. We'd gotten into a place which was not conducive to back-tracking. So we had stopped. Then we had fished. And now we lay about the camp fire and smoked. After a long time, we got out our Forest Service maps and our compasses. Five minutes later, Jack relit his pipe.

"Thing to do in the morning," he said, "is for one of us to climb to the top of this mesa over to the right and see how the ground looks up there. If it's all right, we can work the horses up that big rock slide and hit across country to the west. We just went up the wrong gulch, that was all."

Which we did. At five o'clock the next afternoon we made camp on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison, well on our way to the entrance of the Sapinero country, a previous objective, and the incident of having been lost was nothing more than a pleasant memory, which had led to a couple of wild-eyed fishermen staking out a certain little spot that they — and few others — could reach and where Native trout grew far larger than usual. Which, by the way, is far more pleasant than to have the sheriff and the undertaker roaming the hills in search of your whitened bones.

In fact, the real mountaineer has a set rule about being lost, especially if the accident happens late in the day. That is to make camp, to start a fire, to rest comfortably and wait for morning. This, in fact, is mandatory if the mountains happen to be offering their usual set of wares in the name of thunderstorms or a summer snow flurry and its accompanying gale. Then the move for camp is a

hurried one, with the axe pulverizing the first bit of dry pitch encountered so that it will ignite with the first match and hold its fire against the wind long enough to start blazing the dry twigs and branches which have been torn from the lower trunks of near-by pines. And it's toward the wide-branching forms of coniferous wood which the mountaineer moves when he's in trouble, especially from the weather. He knows he has a better chance for a dry spot beneath them on which to make his bed than in aspens, or in lodgepoles, to say nothing of being fairly sure of finding pitchy cones or dry needles close against the trunk with which to aid his fire.

But the man who'd found death on Twin Flats had evidently not known of such things as this. He had gone for a little walk. In that little walk he had lost his sense of direction. He had become excited. He had hurried from one hill to the next, finally to reach a flat where, if he had but known it, he could have found any one of twenty spots from which he could have seen the plains country beyond and studied out his direction. But he had hurried, and hurry had become frenzy and panic. And he had died.

True, he had possessed no maps. Nor had he any compass. But he had the sun rising in the east and sinking in the west, and something else — his own footprints which would have led him to safety again. There's just the trouble in the hills. Persons don't think of those things when they get excited. But troubles often dissolve quite naturally when one sits down and calms the mind and figures that being lost in the mountains isn't such a terrible thing after all, if you've just got time for common sense.

As for the aid of maps, they're great after you know

them. Before that, they're a bit difficult, in spite of their simplicity. There is hardly a section of the Rocky Mountain Region, or at least of those districts in which are comprised the various national forests, that have not been explored by Forest Rangers, with the result that roads — both automobile and wagon — and main trails have been plainly and accurately mapped in segmented divisions running a quarter of an inch to the mile. Once one has become familiar with them, those maps become merely a mathematical problem of distance pitted against direction. But before that they're a Chinese puzzle, and so, before starting into a strange territory, one doesn't trust the map. He asks questions and learns for the first time in his life how inaccurate he is in receiving directions, and how doubly inaccurate ninety-nine persons out of a hundred are in giving them.

"How'll I get out to your place," I screamed over a static-filled long-distance telephone late one night, as I conversed with an aged prospector, stuck far out upon a sagebrush mesa as the guard over a deserted mine in a town equally deserted, except for the telephone. "Can I follow the telephone poles? "

"Nope, you can't do that," came the weak voice from the other end of the line; "they head down the cañon an' there ain't room on either side of the river to let two fleas pass. Ain't you got one of them govvnment maps? "

"Yes. But it doesn't show any trails or road out that way."

"Well, there ain't none, 'ceptin' what's been washed out for twenty-odd years. Now, tell you what you do. Go past the big hotel an' take that first road down the lane. That'll keep right on goin', but you head off to the left at Beaver Creek an' follow that there cow trail up 'till it

pinches out. Then you strike off cross country toward Willow Creek an' cross it an' come to Texas Creek. After that you work up to the forks an' take the left one an' follow it to the end, an' then take off south 'till you come to the old Mill Gulch Road. Then it ain't but a piece out here."

I left the telephone well satisfied, and sought my partner.

"Got the directions? " he asked.

"Sure! " And repeated them word for word. Jack, in the greater wisdom of his years, gave me a look of consuming scorn.

"And I suppose there'll be a sign a mile square at Beaver Creek, and another at Willow, and a hand pointing the direction to Texas Creek, and a signpost saying it's two miles to the forks. Fine lot of directions you've got. All they'll get us into is trouble. Let's see what the map says."

We saw. The map said there was a Beaver Creek two miles south of town, and another Beaver Creek three miles west, while a short distance to the northeast was Wet Beaver, Little Beaver, Middle Beaver and Sick Beaver Creeks, all converging into the simplicity of Big Beaver. As for Willow Creek, there were three, scattered within a radius of ten miles. Texas Creek and its two forks, of which we were to choose the left, evidently was not enough of a stream to warrant mapping at all. And there we were. So we threw away the instructions, took the general direction of the place we wanted to find, followed the first road that led that way, struck out over the sagebrush when the highway veered, and then, for the rest of the day, followed cow trails, sheep trails and abandoned roads when they served our purpose and the sagebrush when they didn't — and reached our destination. Nor was it the

last time in a thousand miles of wandering that we took an objective and worked toward it. For the time came when we asked only to be put upon the beginning of the trail. We had learned that to give the average person more of a problem in direction-giving than that was a useless and wasteful task.

Try it yourself sometime. Describe at length, for instance, a circuitous road from your town to the next one. Do it thoroughly. Then go over the road and see how many things you've missed; the road, for instance, that turns off by the milldam and which you hadn't considered at all. The three houses which intervene before the big white house is reached—the one which you had announced as the first house on the right-hand side of the road. The highway which you had glibly described as Wide Road, without announcing the fact that it was so called because it was the narrowest in the district. Such little mistakes as those are often confusing to a traveler. It makes him eye you a bit ferociously as you append the inevitable:

“You'll see the road right there. You can't miss it.”

Therefore, the sooner the mountain traveler becomes trail wise, the sooner he will progress easily. And becoming trail wise in the hills quickly assumes proportions resembling a mere mathematical problem. One knows, for instance, that all streams go downhill, and quickly adds to that the instinctive knowledge that if there are habitations anywhere in the vicinity they will be close to that stream for the simple reason that humans cannot live without water. In quite the opposite fashion, if one's progress depends upon sighting something from a distance, one sticks to the ridges, knowing full well that he can drop down to water if he desires. Or that, in wooded districts, it

is a habit of mountains to break the continuity of their forests by little patches of green, called parks, and that these little parks are more frequently than not connected by tiny streams, along which one can work, thus avoiding deadfalls until a trail of some sort, either game, cow, sheep or forestry, can be struck. That aspen growths are easier to penetrate than lodgepoles, where the trees grow so thickly that one wonders where they find space for their foliage. That too far down on a hill — or too high on its side — will almost invariably lead one into deadfalls, but that there is nearly always a space somewhere between these two points where the tree growth is thinned and the down timber not so thickly scattered, and that if you'll work down a bit or up a bit, you'll find it. That if you're headed south, the sun should cast its shadow on your right side in the morning and your left in the afternoon, while if you're headed north, the opposite should be true. That if the sun isn't shining, it will save time to stop every now and then and look at the compass, with the conviction always that compasses rarely lie, even though they may appear to. And that a compass is a truer friend than a landmark. Because, sometimes that landmark isn't there!

For instance, Jack and I once placed faith in an old friend in Steamboat Springs. We wanted to go to Rainbow Lake, hitting it from the top of the Rabbit Ear Range, which isn't the easiest thing in the world to do, since at about that point the Rabbit Ear, forming as it does a portion of the Continental Divide, takes a sudden notion to indulge in a general spasm of snowdrifts, sheer plunges, crags, precipices, rock slides, thundering streams, seepage ground and what not. So we asked our old friend just how to get to a certain point on the left side of Mount Ethel, a mountainous lady with whom we were not at all

acquainted. The friend waved his hand in dismissal of the subject.

"Easiest thing in the world. Where you heading out from? Long Lake? Well, take the trail out of there and you'll hit the old Buffalo Pass road in three or four miles. Then you'll run into an old drift fence. Can't miss it. Plain as the nose on your face. Built years ago right along the top of the Continental Divide, to keep the cattle from North Park from edging over into this country. That way, you see, they'd hit the drift fence at the top of the divide and that'd turn 'em back into North Park so the cow-punchers wouldn't have to look so far for 'em. Can't miss it. There's a trail along it. Just follow that trail, and it'll take you right to the left side of Mount Ethel."

At a later date, Jack Nankervis and I fished in Rainbow Lake. We'd taken the trail out of Long Lake. We'd crossed the old Buffalo Pass road. We'd made our way along the top of the Continental Divide, sometimes in places where the national vertebræ became so scrawny that we gathered handfuls of pebbles, just for the sport of it, and as we rode along, tossed them first over the side that led to the Pacific and then over the other side toward the Atlantic. At a hundred places, as we traversed the bare, wind swept reaches of timber line, with a turn of the head, we could view the Wasatch Mountains of Utah and the Snowy Range of the Rockies, a scant forty miles from Denver. We reached Mount Ethel and finally got on the good side of that lady, which was the left. We crossed eternal snowdrifts for miles at a stretch. We skidded our horses over immense stretches of rounded bedrocks, yanked them out of bogs and seepage and reached Rainbow. But to this day we have never seen that drift fence, or even a pole or crossbar or wire of it!

All of which, of course, is beside the point for many persons, no matter how much they may seek the heart of nature by means of the pack train. For all such invasions of the Rockies in the everlasting desire to get away from the madding throng of those who would rather tread on Nature than treat with her are not difficult affairs. In fact, they're often quite the opposite. The dude ranch, for instance.

For that person not initiated to the hills and the ramifications thereof, the dude ranch is busily filling all needs. There are the horses, fitted to the work and rentable at so much per day. There is the equipment: packsaddles, beds, tent, cooking outfit, and the food, properly proportioned, and cow-punchers, hired for the purpose, to do the packing, make and break camp, guide the way along trails which are to them as familiar as a well-read book, to do the cooking, and if necessary catch the fish or tree the bear or mountain lion, whatever the object of the trip may be. In fact, a dude ranch cow-puncher in these days is good for almost anything, except to tell you the names of the wild flowers. That, so far, is just a little tough to swallow. But he'll take you out and get you home again, and keep you well and comfortable on the way, which amounts to a great deal. To say nothing of having accomplished the purpose of having led you into a country where every hill is not peopled by at least one person with a book in one hand and a pencil in the other, busily tramping down fifty varieties of flora and fauna in an endeavor to find out whether the bloom just ahead is really a mountain mignonette or something that looks like it. To say nothing of evading the sight-seeing busses which now have a habit of swishing along the wider roads of the Rockies in jovial little groups of twenty and thirty, and

the fishermen who flood forth to every stream within automobile reach, determined to make the last finny enemy pay the forfeit, whether he's of keeping size or not. To the first of the last frontiers, the dude ranch outfit can lead one in safety and in comparative comfort, if one doesn't mind a few blisters after the first day in the saddle. And the cow-puncher guide will do all of that with joy and appreciation of the desire of his guests to get away from the routine run of things, knowing full well that the last frontiers are reserved for him and those of his ilk, who can strike into the unknown, into the recesses of the dim trail with its uncertainties, its problems in woodcraft, its difficulties and its dangers — and have a good time out of it.

For all trails that lead beyond the end of the road are not government affairs, marked as such things are with the notch and slash of the Service staring at you whenever you need its guidance, with the logs sawed where dead trees have fallen across the road, and a sign now and then to tell you the distance to Trapper's Lake. The ones, for instance, that lead to the last frontiers of game and fishing and Nature in her wilder moods are far different affairs.

A winding ribbon, for instance, made perhaps a century ago when the Utes migrated here and there through the otherwise trackless Rockies, and when the Utes faded, taken up by the prospector, pulled onward and onward from mountain to mountain in his search for gold. Or perhaps a twisting thing, resultant from the fact that at some far day in the past an elk paused at the top of a ridge and wondered what glorious revelry of food might await him in the faint greenery of a valley far below; to be followed by other game, and gradually become a run.

Then to be followed by the hunter, that he might kill the thing which had made the path upon which he pursued it to its death. And followed in turn by the cowboy, hunting the stray "critters" of his herd, until to-day it leads, meandering and alluring, difficult and full of pitfalls, into the depths of the last frontier. That is what beckons to the seasoned mountaineer, and when he prepares to follow it, he prepares also for anything that may happen, from a horse careening down the side of a mountain to a broken leg.

All of which may not sound alluring to a city dweller. But then city dwelling doesn't sound alluring to the mountaineer, so that makes it even, and the preparations go merrily on. First, naturally, come the horses, and the man about to take a pack trip studies them carefully, particularly as to their gaits. Over in Steamboat Springs right now are two horses that I'd like very well to have in my own pasturage. They're burning up hay by the bale and oats by the ten-pound pail, while Jack and I chalk up a black mark against our horse sense. We thought Baldy and Barney would make a couple of mighty good pack animals. But we hadn't taken into consideration that Barney's funny, shuffling little singlefoot would shake his pack and produce sores on his withers, and that Baldy's slight limp in the left hind leg would cause her to slip on a rock slide with a consequent fall which mussed her up considerably. Therefore, it's worth while to study a gait and limb soundness; one doesn't go on boulevards when one hits the unused trail.

In fact, one doesn't do a lot of things that the unthinking person would do. One doesn't take any more clothing than one actually needs, beyond a change in case of rough weather, a slicker, a big coat and a second pair of boots.

One thinks quite a while before-hand on the question of food, preferring to eat a standard diet of nourishing things rather than a variety of fol-de-rols, because the horses that carry that food may be forced to fight their way through the crumbling drifts of a mountain pass or scramble down descents upon which even a man on foot will slip — and weight counts, even upon a horse. One will take a compact little medicine chest, with a bottle of permanganate tablets to slip into the incision following the bite of a rattlesnake; a box of cold tablets; a bottle of iodine and a little bundle of swab sticks; and if he has a smattering of medicine, a hypodermic outfit with a vial of strychnine tablets. In addition to which there'll be the ordinary first-aid kit, purchasable at any drug store, and containing everything necessary for the ordinary injury, from picric acid for burns to the compress for a large wound, for a pack train journey often leads one from a week to ten days away from the nearest civilization and is a more serious affair than the usual fishing or hunting jaunt where one can reach town quickly and where the surroundings are familiar.

The wise packer carries the lightest tent procurable, perhaps even army pup tents that can go in his bedding roll. And he'll chase the fetish of waterproofing until it becomes an insufferable bore. Because, you know, mountain streams have a habit of becoming swollen after a summer afternoon's downpour; and trails have a habit of running to the side of a stream, leaping gaily across and continuing their course on the other side, leaving the trailer to do the same — if possible. A pack animal sometimes slips in a stream, and when it does, he's down until a rope around his neck and a horse pulling hard against the other end of that rope hooked around the horn of the saddle, jerks

him and his dripping pack to his feet again. Then, after all other preparations are made, the mountaineer will cast his pale blue eyes around the circle of his acquaintances and find at least a couple of other nature-loving fools who'd like to make the trip with him. The mountains were not built for the lone wolf, in spite of the fact that somebody is continually attempting to flout the statement. Of course there are those who prove the exceptions. Then there are the bones, whitening with the years, and the missing skull, carried to some coyote or mountain lion den, to prove the rule.

Friendly enemies, faithless friends. Such are the Rockies to the man who attempts to pit himself alone against their unknown reaches. Far better the consolidated thought of several heads, the knowledge of companionship with its proof against loneliness—a screeching coyote, shrieking from the impenetrable blackness of a mountain night is much more cheerful when there's another fellow along than when one's alone—and above all, the protection that several persons can give against the dangers that lurk in spite of every precaution when one strikes the unknown trail.

Not the danger of the bear or the mountain lion or the fabled catamount, for there is practically no such thing as animal menace; one carries a sidearm only, rarely of a larger caliber than a .32.20. He only asks that it have a six-inch barrel and rifle sights, and if he knows anything at all of firearms, he is able to shoot with rifle accuracy up to a distance of thirty yards, and one rarely sees a shootable animal that demands more. More, the mountaineer has a playful little habit of doing rifle tricks with his long-barreled six-gun. If the aim is a bit difficult, he doesn't swing his gun down to an aiming point, according

to the shooting gallery rules. Instead, he raises it as he would a rifle, extends his weapon only about half the distance that he would if he were shooting according to revolver rules, and then steadies the barrel with his left hand as he would steady a rifle. Following which he pulls the trigger and picks up his game.

To be correct, he *doesn't* pull the trigger. He squeezes it, slowly expending more and more force until the hammer is released without the slightest jar or deviation from aim. And as he does that, he holds himself steady against the instinctive flinching from the sound of the explosion. That done, if he knows anything whatever about aligning his sights, he hits his object, which is usually nothing more fearsome than a ground hog or a porcupine for the evening camp meat; and let it be known that, properly cooked, they're both larruping good truck!

So the danger of the mountains is not that of the catalogued animal. It's a different kind of beast, lurking nearer the trail, the Beast that is the Hills when they are in ugly mood, waiting to sap the strength of him who invades their private recesses, or break the spirit of even one who has fought against them for years, only to win that he might, in the end, lose his battle.

Our first horse wrangler was Andy, with skin like leather, with wrinkles in the back of his neck that only years of sun and wind could place there. Andy, with his pale blue eyes which had looked upon the thirteen thousand foot heights of Argentine Pass in their most vicious moments, when the winter blizzards had swept them with a ferocity against which a man could only run, flatten himself in the white until the worst of the gale had abated, then leap to his feet for another racing spurt in his frenzied efforts to defeat that which seemed bent upon

taking his life. Andy, who had seen comrades move from his side in the swirls of frigid white, to blur in the sweeping curtains of snow, edge into sight again as they were tossed before him in the arms of the gale, then disappear — and the next day be found, only hunks of ice in the forms of men, their hands clutched forward in a last effort to beat the thing which had beaten them. Andy, who had crossed every mountain pass in Colorado in fair weather and in foul, who had packed with burro and donkey string the wealth of the hills from timber line to the glaring furnaces of the smelters. Who had known the dim trail as boy and man, and who looked forward to the wilderness with the enthusiasm of a child on the way to his first circus. But who had forgotten one thing! that twenty years had passed since last he had pitted his strength against the ferocity of the high country, and that twenty years can make a difference.

It rather struck him, the first morning of our packing out, when quite deliberately he began the throwing of a diamond hitch on the first pack. Following which he halted, looked at the ropes and tried it again. Then he surveyed the rope anew.

“Funny how these things can get away from you,” he said. “Now that there diamond hitch, I used to be able to throw it — just like that. Don’t seem to be able to get the hang of it right now. Guess it’ll come back to me. Don’t make much difference, anyhow. A squaw hitch’ll hold just as good.”

A little while later, he guessed that he’d just put a common ordinary box hitch on; nothing much to jiggle anyway, every horse carried panniers except old Barney with the bedding, and that lay snug to his back. So a box hitch it was, and the outfit swung up the automobile road

from Silver Plume, bound for the first turn to the left after we'd passed the sawmill, and the ancient, abandoned wagon road that would lead us to the eleven thousand foot uncertainties of Loveland Pass.

Time was when Loveland Pass cut quite a figure in Colorado. Back in the days, for instance, when Leadville was seething with its first flush of the mining boom, when Dillon and Wheeler and Robinson squawked and roared and hustled from dawn to dusk and back to dawn again with the thrill of gold and silver, when every metal-bearing mountain was resplendent at evening with the fire-fly lights of the carbides atop the caps of miners, and railroads worked construction gangs overtime that they might build just one more mile of narrow gauge toward the waiting bonanza. Then Loveland Pass was quite important, with its strings of ore wagons moving doggedly to the straining of six and eight-horse teams, with its stages careening upon their leathern springs as they hurried "over the hump" toward the raucous life of the mining camps. But times have changed since then.

Leadville isn't the rushing camp that it once was, though hope springs eternal where there is gold and silver. Dillon is only a village again, Wheeler but an abandoned box car, Robinson nothing more than a thing of desolation, sprawling upon Fremont Pass, while along its edge are the ties of a railroad — but the rails are gone. The ore wagons and leathern-springed stages no longer travel through Loveland. In the ruts of the road that once existed the creek runs when it cares to, and the deadfalls lie here and there undisturbed. It is abandoned, merely a scar across the hills, a crumbling monument to a departed gold rush. And it was our primary trail.

An hour, and the going became more difficult. A horse

had gone through a bridge, rotted from long disuse; he had to be unpacked, pulled to his feet and repacked. The deadfalls across the road had necessitated precarious detours down sheer sidehills, with the hoofs of the horses digging desperately as they pulled themselves back to the safety of the road. Higher, another hour brought a few drifts across the road, and plunging beasts, as they bucked snow to their bellies. Then the willows, stretching in every direction as willows have a habit of doing at the headwaters of a mountain stream; the sickening sucking of hoofs as our pack beasts pulled one leg free from the concealed bog only that another might become entangled. And after that came the snow.

It stretched before us in every direction. A gulley filled with it here, a gulch bankful a hundred yards farther on, and beyond that merely a succession of splotchy white after splotchy white — and the road disappearing into it. Jack reached for his binoculars.

"The eleventh of June," he said, "and folks back east dying of the heat."

Then he lowered the glasses and stood looking for a long time in a direction far remote from the road, searching the mottled drifts one after another. At last:

"No sense trying to fool with that road. It's banked up a hundred and fifty feet deep in places. We'll have to try to get around to the right and hit the ridge."

Andy rubbed his wrinkled neck.

"Just what I was thinkin'," he said. "If we can hit that ridge, we're all right. Snow never lays bad on the other side. Trouble is though, these here drifts don't look like they're crusted."

A moment later, we were sure they weren't crusted. Major was down, pack and all, and Spot, my pinto,

straining at the lariat as we yanked him out. We tried again, with a different horse, more accustomed to snow. A path was broken; one by one, our pack horses plunging behind us, we went sloshing through. But there was only another drift waiting beyond, and a score more after that. And the sun had faded. Far over the ragged, rocky ridge which denoted the scraggly pinnacle of the continent, a roll of thunder sounded ominously. We paid scant attention. Two horses were down in the second drift, and Jack and I were unstrapping the shovel from its designedly handy place atop the lightest pack.

We shoveled through and on to another drift. After that, a steady succession while the thunder rolled anew and the clouds massed heavier. At last came the down-pour, but not of rain. It was hail, pelting against our faces as it swept forward upon a forty-mile gale, and sending us crouching until we could steel ourselves to its attack and again resume our slow labors — of shovelling snow in June.

Horses were scattered everywhere now, heads down, manes and tails lashed by the hurricane, which thrashed us with ice for a full ten minutes, then as suddenly shifted its burden to a thing of fleecy white, driving with the determined steadiness of a January blizzard, while the thunder continued to crash and the lightning flashed with such nearness that we could feel the crinkling of static at the edges of our hair.

The incongruity of it! A blizzard! While there still rolled the thunder, and the horses were snorting with fright at gray-green flashes of lightning, every bolt it seemed, striking home, just over the hill. And we shoulder deep in a snowdrift, shovelling doggedly, while the ptarmigan, in their summer plumage, shrieked and

squawked in rapid flights about us, who had invaded the privacy of their snowy home. But there was little time for noting such things as fool, edible birds that know no more than to approach within a short stone's throw of humans. There was something else: a snowdrift with never a solid footing until its very base was reached, and stretching fifty feet onward, while in the little patch of stony ground beyond, rapidly whitening with the blizzard, a pack string snorted anew at the lightning and thunder, and strove vainly for a means of return to the lower country. Besides, it was five o'clock now. Two hours more, with these clouds hanging above us, and darkness would drop like a suddenly loosened curtain. Darkness meant a night camp upon the pinnacle of the world, without shelter, without wood, without even a windbreak. We worked feverishly. And broke through, to cross a smaller drift, and two heavier ones, before, hulks of white in the gray of the storm, we slowly began the ascent to the summit, an ascent where there was no trail.

Great rocks barred our progress and sent us to racking detours. Crevices yawned, while we edged past them, one by one. Loose shale slipped beneath cringing hoofs. Higher, higher, while the blizzard took on new intensity; while our clothes crusted with it. The temperature had dropped below freezing now. The manes and tails of the horses became hard, stiffened things of frozen white and the packs only so many ice-laden lumps upon stolid beasts, halting at every pretext nor moving until a human hand should guide them.

Over and to a level where the wind flattened us against the backs of our mounts, and the sweep of the snow became blinding. Onward, Andy in the lead, with hope fighting fear. Six o'clock now. Another hour —

"Andy — *Andy!* Where are you taking us? "

He halted at the scream in my voice, and cupping his hands, shouted back:

"Got to go this way. This is the west side of the pass! "

"It's not! " Jack had come beside me now. "That's the east side — we'd just be going back where we came from. Besides, that's a ledge drift there — a hundred feet deep if it's an inch — and nothing to hold it. We'd start an avalanche."

Andy stared; snow-blinded eyes had seen only a patch of snow, not the overhanging thing of menace which it really was. One horse upon that and a thousand tons of snow would have gone downward, to say nothing of a human and a beast. Dully Andy turned his animal, and as he passed us, we could see a gaunt expression of acute suffering in his features, a man fighting a condition which called for the strength of young men, strength such as he had known twenty years before when others had died on Argentine and he had lived to help carry them in.

A long swing, and again a call, stentorian, excited. Jack was hanging far from his horse, staring at the snow-whitened ground.

"What's the sense of this? We've crossed our own trail and we're following it back. We can't go through those drifts again."

There we stood and fought it out, with the blizzard chopping our words into queer sequences, and the darkness creeping closer and closer with every moment. Far down to the right lay a fringe of timber, and ground that seemed clear of drifts. Our compass pointed to it. But Andy rebelled.

"What's the sense of fighting it all over again? It'll take us down the east side of the range. What's the sense

of that — we've got to go over there, I tell you. Over there! ”

And he pointed — toward his west; but the compass said it was the east. At last he dropped his arms.

“ If I had a landmark,” he said, then silently followed us as we began the sliding, dangerous descent, down the forty-five degrees angle of a snow-covered mountain, toward the welcome embrace of timber, and the tiny patches of dryness beneath the low-hanging pines where tired men might sleep after eleven hours of saddle and snow and climbing. When the fire was blazing, Andy only sat and looked at it, or mumbled something about landmarks. It was as though something which had formed the heart of him had departed up there, when two men, fooling around with the newer order of things, should believe a mere piece of jiggling steel against the word of a man who had fought mountains and their moods since boyhood.

“ But look here,” said Jack finally, “ did you ever get in a tangle like this before — when you didn't have a landmark? ”

He shook his head.

“ Always go by a landmark,” came finally.

The next morning, when we had broken the ice in the little pool formed by a drift seepage, and shaken four inches of snow from the protruding ends of our bedding rolls, we took the compass and the glasses and the Forest Service map, and led Andy to the top of a ridge from which we could see Gray's and Torrey's Peak.

“ The map and the compass show we're just a mile and a half west of those mountains,” we argued.

“ We're lost,” answered Andy. “ But if we ain't — the old road ought to lie right down there in the gulch.”

And there it lay, a quarter of a mile away. That after-

noon we were well along on the trail to Leadville and that night Andy mumbled in his sleep. He had taken no part in our calculations as we had figured out other little problems of the day's journey.

He had only sat slumped on his horse, shoulders high, hands clasped on the horn of his saddle, a man with his spirit gone — stolen by twenty years' absence from a thing he had known in intimacy, and by a map and a piece of steel in a cage of glass. Two days later, we led our horses into a corral at Leadville, and I waved Andy aside as I reached for the rope of a pack horse.

"Better take it easy, Andy," I said.

He put his hand to his head. He whirled dizzily, then sank on a bale of hay.

"Don't know what's wrong with me," he confided, "but I'm sicker 'n hell! "

Nor did he mention that half of it was heart-sickness, he who had crossed every mountain pass in Colorado! The next morning, Jack and I went down to the railroad station to see Smith, the forest ranger, who, between such trifling duties as scaling a few carloads of logs, walking six miles to another sawmill, and then pounding the saddle for eighteen more out to Twin Lakes, had promised to get us a new wrangler. The conductor of the South Park train for Denver had just sounded "all aboard." Out from the station came a tall man, with freckles and wrinkles in his neck, holding a duffle bag lightly before him, and with almost a buoyant tread, climbed the steps of the rear car. I caught at the arm of my partner.

"Jack! " I said, "There's Andy! "

Jack Nankervis, himself a pioneer of a younger day, nodded.

"Sure got well in a hurry, didn't he? " he asked. Then,

with a sudden note of sympathy, "But a few years make a lot of difference. A man may think a lot of things, but when it comes to bucking up against 'em — let's pull back a bit. He might not want us to see him."

And with an inward bow to twenty years ago, we hid like two boys behind the baggage truck, while the South Park train puffed stodgily onward toward Denver.

## CHAPTER VII

### EASY, BOY!

A FELLOW called me up the other day and said he wanted to buy that black horse, the old one with the Cary Ranch Hog-eye brand on his left shoulder. Before I'd thought, I'd sold it to him, over the telephone, with instructions to leave the money down at the feed store. That was all there was to it; bills of sale and a lot of regulations aren't so necessary when the animal is ancient and a bit bony and cheap of price.

Ten minutes later I put on my hat and hurried downtown, looking for the fellow who'd bought my horse, so that I could buy him back again. But he was gone and the feed-store man didn't know his name. With the result that ever since I've realized slightly how Judas must have felt when he'd awakened to what he'd really done. After a horse — no matter how many cuss words you've applied to him — has wobbled along through a thousand miles of high country, been cussed to his feet when he's fallen through bridges, cussed out of creeks and bog holes, up and down dale, through drift and seepage and marsh, aided and abetted, of course, by sufficient tugging on the halter rope and now and then a lariat strung from another horse — after all that's happened, and you've gotten the old plug safely home when you've known a full dozen times that he was done for, it makes one feel rather sneaky and mean to sell him for a few dollars when by rights he should be put in grass to his shoulders and told to eat himself to death.

For after all, it's the horse that's the backbone of a pack trip, no matter how cantankerous he may be, and if he doesn't come home, the outfit's liable to stay marooned somewhere else. And the black did come home, with his pack on his back, even though he laid down and rolled with it while we were divesting the rest of the animals of the burdens which they had lugged through practically the entire stretch of the Continental Divide of Colorado. Which was a good deal more than had been expected of him; the black had known better days.

For that matter, it's a tough horse of any kind that can stand up under an extended journey along the trail — and off the trail — in the mountainous districts. It's something far different from the smooth certainty of a motor road, to be shown a mountain pass, perhaps with the trail snowed in and the only means of crossing the precarious footing of a rock slide which rises easily for a time, then steeper, and finally in a gigantic confusion of tumbled stone that, once it is reached, is little less than appalling. Or to be led to the edge of a frothing creek where the white water lashes and tumbles, and then be gently urged into it, with the odds even that he'll end up head over heels downstream. Yet, after a considerable familiarity with horses in time of stress, I've rather come to the conclusion that there's a gambling instinct hidden away somewhere within them, and that a departure now and then from the beaten track carries with it a certain amount of relish.

The other day I saddled up Spot, my pinto, for the first time since I had turned him into the corral after six weeks of arduous work — during which time he had risked his life for me more than once. We went forth to the smoothness of an automobile road for what had been

intended to be merely a pleasant, quiet little jaunt. It turned out to be nothing of the kind. The horse was "spooky." He shied at this and that and the other thing — objects he had seen before a hundred times. He was loggy. It took more than the usual touch on the neck with the rein to make him turn, and when he did move, it was difficult to get him back to the road again.

"All right, Kid," I said at last. "If you must have it."

So I turned him to a straight-up trail, and he went at it like a streak, while I hung to his mane with one hand to keep the saddle from slipping, and grinned at the delighted ecstasy of the animal as he ploughed into his work. Over rocks and stony stretches, old mine dumps where the trail feathered out completely, through deadfall and close-grown quaker growths he went, all of his own volition, until the froth stood upon his shoulders and his distended nostrils blew like an engine exhaust. He was a different horse, thrilled with life, eager and anxious to slide down the side of a hill with his hind legs slanting until his hind quarters nearly touched the ground, or digging his shoes into the shifting gravel of a straight-up pitch as we swerved out of the gulch. When the afternoon of strenuousness, risks, insecure footings and arduous climbing was over, I turned him back to the automobile road and he trotted along to the corral in perfect peace. He'd gotten the variety that he'd wanted — and the world was good.

Perhaps such evidences of horse initiative form the reason why the Westerner looks upon the Eastern saddle and the Eastern style of riding with disdain, fully recompensed by the scorn which Easterners have for the horse and saddle offerings of the West. To the man of the East,

the Western horse is only a "plug", without breeding, and rarely with any of the equine charms which the animal of the bridle path possesses. He isn't gaited in the same fashion, he isn't "spirited" in the same way, and according to tradition, he'll buck you off at the first opportunity. The Western saddle, according to the bridle-path experts, is a rocking chair; but then the Westerner looks upon the Eastern saddle as a postage stamp, and the big laugh of a group of cow punchers around a camp fire is when some wag with a sense of mimicry arises, pulls his tight-legged overalls a bit higher upon his high-heeled, filagreed boots, and gives an imitation of a man on a bridle path in the throes of "posting" to avoid the jolting of a trot. Westerners don't "post", just as they don't ride with their knees up under their chin, and just as, in fact, they don't do anything equine in the same fashion, except, of course, to mount from the left side.

Horses, riders, saddles and styles of riding are different and built for a different purpose. It is true that the Western horse is rarely a pedigreed affair, thin-bellied from continuous grain feeding, and nervous of temperament. Instead, he's of range stock, just as his father and mother before him were of range stock. He has a belly like the proverbial cannon-ball stove from hay feeding, and it serves a definite purpose. A horse needs a certain protuberance when he is called upon from once to fifty times a day, to ascend grades that easily average forty-five per cent. It keeps the heavy stock saddle from slipping.

Instead of being nervous, he's a thinking beast, for he has things to think about. He is a working horse; it is part of his training to be on the job and to be quick about it, yet to hold in reserve a certain amount of equine sense that will make him look over his surroundings before he

plunges into them. The Eastern horse is built for "spirit" and for traveling along smooth highways or bridle paths. There he can be as "spooky" as he pleases and cavort as much as he likes. The Western horse spends his life in sagebrush, where prairie dogs, badgers, and other burrowing animals have filled the ground with pitfalls, in fording streams, in climbing mountains after stock that have strayed from the main herd without a bit of regard for roads or trails or deadfalls, in rushing spurts and swifter steps and turns, all to the guidance of a slight touch on the neck, instead of a pull at the bit, such as directs the Eastern animal. And when his rider leaves the saddle and drops the reins to the ground, there he stands until that rider comes back.

So, after all, there's no reason for derision of either horse, just as there is no reason for a difference of opinion as regards saddles and riding. The Eastern man rides upon a small saddle, with his stirrups high, because, after all, he is only riding. When the horse trots, he rises and falls with the motion, missing the jolts by taking one of them while he is in the air and making the next one throw him upward again. The Westerner rides with stirrups long enough to allow him to barely raise himself fully clear of the saddle, with a cantle that rises high in the back to support him when the horse is climbing as near straight up as a horse can go, and a bulge in front against which to support himself during swift movements of the animal, downhill plunges and in trotting, and the Westerner trots a lot.

But he doesn't do it in the bridle-path fashion. Instead, he stands in his stirrups, every muscle strained, his rein hand extended awkwardly, his free arm either held stiffly against his lower chest, or with his hand hooked around

the horn of the saddle to further accentuate the stiffness of his general poise. There is no grace about any portion of him; he isn't seeking grace, anyway. He's out to get somewhere and to stand in his stirrups until his horse stops trotting. For that matter, the Westerner paradoxically does most of his riding "on foot." He stands when his horse is going uphill, raising himself out of the saddle and leaning awkwardly forward to aid his mount as much as possible. He stands when his beast goes pitching downhill, with his hip bones resting against the cantle. He stands when he throws his rope, when his horse makes a turn upon what seems to be a space not larger than a dime, when it lopes or gallops — and when it bucks.

An operation, by the way, which happens much more often in fiction than in fact. It's true that a cow pony will buck now and then, particularly if he has been off the job for a time, or is just being broken to his life work and is slightly tangled in his mind as to the necessity for going at a lope over country where a hoof may go into a badger hole; for whirling with lightning swiftness at a "neck-rein" touch when a fractious cow-beast suddenly attempts to dodge and go in a different direction; for stopping as if shot when the rope has swirled through the air and dropped about the horns of a desired "critter", or any one of the hundred and one other things that any well-informed cow pony should do. When that happens, the Westerner lugubriously takes the buck out of him, providing he can stick on his back, following which the pony decides to be a good boy and usually stays by his resolve. And sometimes the cow-puncher does it by other means than a succession of bucking-horse contests.

Going over Creede Pass, for instance, Jack Nankervis and myself met another pack outfit, led by a large horse

which walked as though he were on the proverbial pins. His eyes were straight ahead, his gait was mincing. When he reached an obstruction he didn't leap it, nor when he hit the bottom of a gulley did he plough up the other side with the increase of speed so common to the Western animal. The cow-puncher grinned.

"That's my Sunday-school hoss;" he announced, "ain't he gentle?"

"But what," asked Jack, "is that gadget you've got on his bridle?"

Again a grin.

"That's my gentler," came the announcement. Then, while we stared at the smoothly fashioned little "billy" made from a hammer handle and fastened by a small piece of whang-leather to the brow-strap of the bridle, "Thet hoss is one o' th' nicest hosses yuh ever seen — 'ceptin' thet he would buck. Jest a buckin' fool. Thet sort o' thing may be all right for these rodeo hands, but it ain't over-pleasant to no self-respectin' cow-punch to go gallyvantin' through th' air ever' mornin' when he goes out to step on his hoss. So I thought I'd start packin' him an' see if a few beddin' rolls an' sech wouldn't take it out of him. It never done no sech thing. He bucked 'em off faster 'n I could put 'em on. So I went an' got this here idee an' it's worked splendid.

"Yuh see," he explained, "it don't cause no ruction as long 's he's actin' fair 'n square. It won't even raise no rumpus when he's trottin' or runnin' — th' jar ain't enough. But when he goes up in th' air about a yard an' then comes down stiff-legged with his feet bunched, this little thingamajig wallops him on the nose an' it makes him plain uncomf'table. Fact is, he ain't bucked for ten days now, an' I've rode him fust thing in th' mornin' a

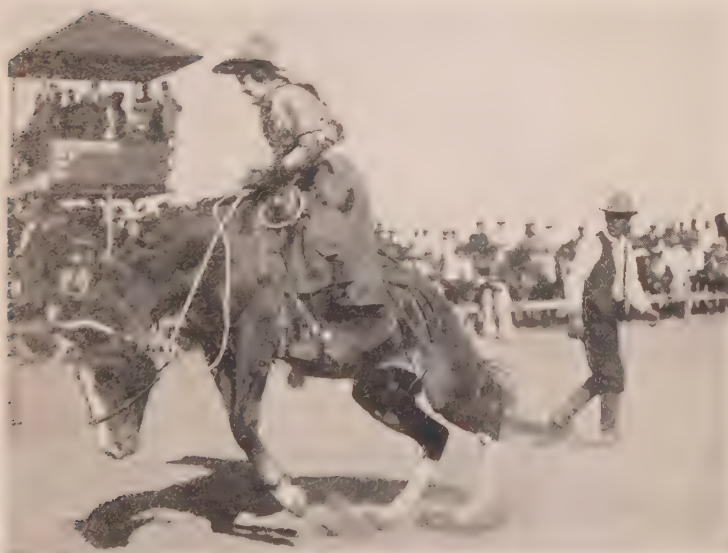
couple o' times. Figgerin' on takin' it off to-morrow; he's shore a sweet hoss when he ain't buckin'."

Which may carry a hint, perhaps, that all cow ponies are not supposed to buck. They're not. In fact, none of them are; they're work animals, built to round up stock, buck blizzards, fight trails, go places as swiftly as possible and come back again without leaving their riders behind somewhere with a bruised head or a broken leg, resultant from having failed to stick in the saddle. The bucking horse of the West is an entirely different animal. He's trained but untamed, as the circus billboards would say, and bucking is his life work, just as being a faithful, dependable mount is the life work of the cow pony. The bucking horse, as such, never stops. Up on the Chug-water, in Wyoming, for instance, there is Eddie McCarty who raises buckin' horses as a part of his livelihood, taking his string from rodeo to rodeo, and the same horses buck as enthusiastically at one place as they do at another. At a dozen places through the West are ranches where the announcement that an outlaw horse which refuses to accept saddle or rider has bobbed up, either in the neighborhood, or a hundred miles away, will cause the owner to forget all other engagements and go tearing down the road in his flivver in search of another member to add to the string which he furnishes to the various "round-up" and cow-hand contest shows which thrive like weeds through every Western State. It's a business now, this furnishing of bucking strings, just the same as the raising of race horses, or cattle or sheep. But they're bucking horses and bucking horses only. They don't double at anything else, for they're as mean and cantankerous as the usual Western horse is faithful.

It is that faithfulness, incidentally, whether he be cow



A SIOUX WAR DANCE—A REGULAR  
FEATURE OF EVERY RODEO



A WOMAN "BUCKIN' HORSE" RIDER



pony or mountain pack plug, which makes the man of the West see red when he hears all horses west of the Nebraska line described as smoke-blowing beasts of meanness and undependability. They're the opposite. They'll prove a lot more worthy, the Western man will tell you, in a pinch where your life depends upon the sense of the animal under you, than many a beast that travels the bridle paths.

Of course, he's not the thing of impossibilities upon the trail, such as the mule and the burro. But he's more comfortable in his mentality, and he'll get farther in the long run, especially if one is assembling animals merely for a certain trip, and not for a steady diet of packing. For the man who must pack continually, there is, of course, the mule, with his faster stride, his greater strength and doggedness. But a mule possesses something else — stubbornness; and a pack train moves only as swiftly as its slowest member.

Which was not very fast back in the days when packing from place to place was a more important form of outdoor diversion than it is to-day. Then it was the burro which formed the means of locomotion, slow, deliberate, with a surefootedness exceeded only by that of a sheep or a mountain goat, and a temperament equalled only by that of — the burro himself. Many of the trails that exist to-day in the Rocky Mountains are those which were first created by burro train, as a weird and new country was opened, first by the prospector and then by the heterogeneous mass of hangers-on which followed his discovery. Naturally in such days, there was no time for the building of a road to a new bonanza. The greatest district in America — they were all the greatest — had just been discovered, and life itself seemed to depend upon getting

there quickly. The result was that the packer brought forth his string of burros and put upon them the beginnings of a town. Then over the hills he went to the building of a new community.

Which way he went made little difference, just so the burros could negotiate it; there are mountain passes in the Rockies to-day which rise as high as thirteen thousand feet, while within five miles the same range can be crossed at a bare eleven thousand. But the burros could make them, and that was all that was necessary. There wasn't the time in those hectic days to look around for easy modes of travel. To-day, for instance, one can reach Leadville upon gravelled surfaces, without ever the need of a set of chains, even in rainy weather. But there was a time, during the early days when every saddle of the mountains gave forth its pack string hurrying to the new bonanza, that things were not so good. When animals sank in the mire and died there. When even human beings went down, and when there came into being a story, now a classic in the West, of the wanderer, floundering along a boggy stretch of the Rockies, mad at the drizzling weather, mad at the country and at himself for ever having penetrated it, only suddenly to see something upon which he could vent his spleen — a hat lying right side up in the road before him. Whereupon he kicked, and a voice came from deep in the mire:

“Hey, I don't mind you bustin' that new hat o' mine. But be derved careful of this here hoss an' saddle thet's under me! ”

Nor is the story so far-fetched, at that. One day, Jack and I rode through the flat stretches of Taylor Park, on the other side of Grizzly Mountain, on the way to Gunnison. The going had been through sagebrush, suddenly

to end in the black hummocks which denoted bog, and our progress slowed. One comes to hate bog; the urging forward of the horses, their nervous snortings as they pause at the brink, eye every inch of ground before them, and then, in response to the spurs — like a sensible person giving way to the entreaties of an imbecile — go faithfully forward, to plunge, to wallow, and then, as if by some miracle, bring themselves to dry ground before the mire entraps them. The sucking of the hoofs as they are pulled doggedly forth, only to sink deeper. The sway of the bodies; the lurching, the twisting — it is as though the rider himself were there in the bog, fighting it out.

So we looked ahead with a thrill of joy. The hummocks had ended; ten feet away was a stretch of grayish, sandy soil, which meant a welcome relief after having picked our way for a quarter of a mile. Jack Nankervis pointed and grinned. I nodded. Little Major, Jack's mount, swung through the last of his task with that peculiar rush of a horse at the end of a difficult endeavor, as though he were glad too. The last hummock and the horse edged into a trot. He struck the brown stretch and then —

Horse and rider were down in an instant, while I, with an instinctive motion, already had loosened the strap which held my rope and was urging my pinto to the very edge of the hummocks that I might toss the lariat to my floundering partner, just swinging himself clear from the saddle and literally throwing himself back to the more secure footing of the black bog. Quicksands! And little Major lay there quivering, as though he knew that motion was useless, that it would only send him deeper. Quickly we got a rope around his neck and knotted it, that it might not choke him. Then, men and horses straining, we dragged him to firmer footing, while the sands closed

behind him, dry appearing, alluring, in wait for the next victim. A burro perhaps, in a case like that, might have been much better. In the first place, he wouldn't have trotted — far be it from a burro to exert himself to that extent — and secondly, a burro seems to have a sixth sense about danger and an exceeding lack of regard for obliging a master by going where he doesn't care to go.

But the burro as a beast of burden is a disappearing factor of Rocky Mountain life to-day. Time was when he bloomed as the rose and his angelic heehaw filled the crisp mountain air, as the fabled dew covers Dixie; when every mountain pass was populated with his kind, jogging along upon tiny steps, and carrying everything from furniture to unassembled mining machinery for the new-born camps, that activities might go on in spite of the lack of railroad and the wagon thoroughfare. Then the tin-can heaps of the little mining towns needed no wind or rain to rob them of their labels; the burros attended to that as soon as the cans were dumped, vying with the goats as to which could hang up the best record for paper consumption. Then the burro was in his prime; the activity of a mining camp was gauged by its population of burros, and alarm clocks were not needed. When a burro really settles down to the task of "sounding off" and puts his soul into a mountain-filling heehaw, a good steam whistle is necessary to drown him out. But the burro is a departing thing now.

Where he has gone, I do not know. Perhaps to the place he came from, which is as vague to the average miner as the region of his exodus. Only sufficient that he is gone. Not entirely, of course, for he still exists in the sheep camps, as they annually invade the sweet-grassed regions of the high country with their blatting charges. Or wanders the streets of deserted mining towns, or frequents the summer

resorts, where energetic boys rent him to enthusiastic tourists at fifty cents a day. But where there were fifty, there is now one. Sometimes, far away in the hills, one sees the long, waving ears and stubby tail as a burro beast scampers away at his approach, a thing gone wild and taking his living as do the deer and the elk.

With him has departed too the man who formed his companion — the professional packer, who with a cross-sectioned instrument of torture known as a packsaddle and a Chinese puzzle called a diamond hitch, could be depended upon somehow to get over the mountains anything from a sack of flour to a half-sized church organ, and all upon the back of a burro.

When Andy left us, we hardly gave the problem of his replacement a thought. We were in pack country, mining country, timber country. Country where the roads were few. Where there were isolated settlements and little towns, far from the railroad. Certainly, there would be no difficulty —

But before we had finished with our task, we had enlisted the services of the entire Forest Service division for that district — on the trail one turns to the ever-ready, efficient Forest Service for aid as an automobilist would hunt a garage — every livery-stable man, and a half-dozen other courses before finally Smith, the Forest Ranger, came to us, bearing in his wake a wide-eyed treasure in the form of Charlie.

A treasure in more ways than one. Charlie could pack. Charlie knew horses. But beyond all that, Charlie represented something more — a cross-section of a fading existence; that country beyond the railroad where persons live in log houses and let the rest of the world go racing on, while they continue to exist according to the traditions

of fifty years ago, when the Rockies were new and a pay streak that would run a hundred dollars to the ton for a year or two meant comfort for the rest of one's life.

Charlie wanted the job. One could see it by the pop of his eyes, the nervous twitching of the hands, the excited way in which he followed us about. He was a thin, wiry young fellow, with tremendous boots covering the landscape — number elevens as he later explained to us because his big toes had departed a year or so ago under the weight of a falling sheet of steel in the building of a gold dredge — and an expression of almost piteous yearning as he trailed us and told us what a good boy he'd be if we'd only give him the job. Which was a bit unusual, since he was the only one of his kind that we'd been able to find, and since the task which awaited him wasn't exactly a picnic. A horse wrangler with a pack outfit has no sweet existence. As an example:

We were camped one morning, high upon the Flat Tops, near what is left of the town of Carbonate, now merely so many rotting logs, with the weeds growing within exclosures where once were sheltered human beings bent upon the grubbing of riches — where riches were not to be found. It was cold, in spite of the fact that the month was July. The wind, chill with the breath of the snowdrifts which lay on the ridges behind us, moaned through the misshapen, timber-line trees, and sent us more than once to the welcome warmth of the fire as we prepared the packs for the move of the day. But suddenly we halted in our activities. From over the hill, borne upon the shrill wind, had come the sound of a bell, to be followed a moment later by a string of horses, moving steadily in single file, as they dipped over the ridge, skirted our camp, and at a swift walk went onward into the distance, finally to

disappear. A half-hour passed, finally to display a speeding figure coming over the rise on a fast lope, and heading for Baldy, one of our string, staked out in the marsh grass.

"Thinks it's his horse," said Jack, and to circumvent a possible argument, I mounted Spot and moved forward. The flying horseman came closer, to pass Baldy and head straight for me.

"F'r Gawd's sake! " he asked. "Got a cigarette? "

I replied that I had and furnished it. Whereupon he puffed feverishly for a full minute. Then:

"Seen anything of a bunch of horses? "

I had, and told him. He pushed forward a gloved hand.

"Lend me a couple more of them pills, won't you? " he begged. "To last me 'till I get back? I'm camp mover for the Big Bar sheep outfit, and them hosses fogged out on me during the night. Didn't think they'd be far away an' I left camp without breakfast, smokes or nuthin'."

"How far have you come? " I asked.

"Fifteen miles," came the laconic answer as he stuffed half a package of cigarettes into his sheepskin-lined vest and put the spurs to his horse. "Bet I'll stake them babies out after this! "

Then he was gone — to a three-mile ride before he reached his runaways, and eighteen more back to camp, a total jaunt of thirty-six miles — just to bring in the horses!

Which may give a possible idea of the choice little duties of a horse wrangler. All in the world he has to do is to arise at four o'clock in the morning, and slide forth into the frosty air of the Continental Divide, chassé through the high, wet grass, move in a seemingly aimless course here and there for a half an hour until he picks up the trail of his animals and then follow them down

until at last he can catch the slight tinkle of the horse bell, attached to the most tractable creature, and finally bring them into camp. For horses will wander, in spite of hobbles, in spite of everything. One may search all afternoon for an ideal place in which to camp — the idealness of which is gauged entirely by water and good food for the horses, with the humans of the outfit taking second place — one may hobble his horses and lead them into a perfect heaven of food, with the best bunch grass in the whole Rocky Mountain region, with good, dry spots for rolling and resting and then chase them five miles in the morning because, during the night, they have taken a notion to see what is on the other side of the hill! Once in the Rabbit Ear Range, Jack and the wrangler and myself lost three hours in evading a tremendous section of tumbled rock which sheered off in precipitous drops, because we felt sure that if we ever attempted to make our objective by that course it would, in all surety, result in the death of one of our horses. So we made agonizing detours, through stretches of deadfall which hemmed us in time after time until a means of exit seemed impossible. We forded creeks and dropped through long stretches of bog, thankful even for that since it had saved us the danger of that tremendous stretch of rock. Then at last, congratulating ourselves upon our sagacity, we made camp, hobbled our horses and turned them loose into a perfect Eden of grass. The next morning our wrangler arose, went whistling forth — and disappeared. An hour passed — two. Then frantic calls for assistance from far away. He had found the horses, chain hobbles and all, upon the very pinnacle of that stretch of dangerous rock which we had worked the entire afternoon to avoid. Which forms one reason why horse wranglers are such

excellent cussers, and why anybody, after a pack trip, can give Captain Kidd and all the rest of the pirate outfit cards, spades and big and little Casino and then beat them hands down at the use of staple and fancy swear words. There is no animal in the world so lovable, so faithful — and so downright ornery as a mountain pack horse!

Add to these little details the labor of saddling three or four horses, packing four more, riding twenty-five miles a day — one seldom makes more with a pack string — unpacking, feeding the animals, chopping wood for the camp fire and helping generally with the chores, all for three dollars a day, and one has a good idea of why Jack and myself were a bit surprised at Charlie's mad desire for that "position." Nor did the reason come out until that night when, tremendous new spurs clanking proudly upon his number eleven boots, in spite of the fact that we had finished our riding some five hours before, Charlie and I went down to Twin Lakes to get some sucker-minnows for the Mackinaw Trout fishing of the following day.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Charlie, as he tripped in the darkness over the three-inch shanks of those proud spurs, "I'll tell you just how it is. It's all right up here in the summer time when the tourists are comin' through an' you can make a few dollars doing chores or sellin' 'em sucker bait, but winter closes down in October and lasts until June, and then there ain't much happening except when somebody wants to borrow some wood and comes over to your house for it. And there ain't many jobs that a fellow 'd have. Last winter I thought I had a good one. A man gave me a job of takin' the pay checks up to the Three Q mine. Well, I got about halfway there and a blizzard set in, and the next thing I knowed, there I was, snowed in, without nothin' to eat and no way to get out or

nothin'. Guess I'd of died except that the fellows up at the mine waited three days for the pay checks and when they didn't come, got sore and quit. Naturally, when they come down, they found me, and gave me somethin' to eat."

"And what had you done in the meanwhile?" I asked, as Charlie stumbled again over his wonderful spurs.

"Oh, stomped around to keep warm," he answered casually. "But that ain't all the reason I want to get out. I want to see the country!" he announced with a sudden flare of enthusiasm. "I want to get out and see how the other half of the world lives and see these big cities, like Denver. Then, when I make enough money, I want to take Mama down there, so's she can see a street car!"

After that, the clanking of those gigantic spurs — I had given them to him more as a joke than anything else — was not quite so funny. A boy — he was little more — risking his life in a blizzard, subsisting for three days and nights without food, that he might buy a few sticks more of wood with which to resist the terrific winter of the high country. Thrilled with the idea of viewing a big city like Denver, and of living to see the day when he could take his mother there, and, in these days of airplanes, of an overabundance of civilization, enjoy the tremendous sight of seeing a tram car come rumbling down the street!

It sounds impossible. Yet such conditions are not at all unusual in the high stretches of the Rockies, where the same little log cabin often shelters the children and grandchildren of pioneers who fought their way there sixty years ago. People of the hills seem to care for little but to remain people of the hills. Nor does it always require distance and height and inaccessibility to hold them to that condition.

My home town is upon a railroad, only thirty-eight miles from Denver. It is on the Victory Highway, and sometimes, during the tourist season, as many as six thousand automobiles flood through it in a day. Yet, a few years ago, while I was in the throes of putting on a mining celebration, I found one man who had not seen a city larger than this place of fifteen hundred inhabitants for more than fifty years. As for the children, the percentage is far greater.

I've a friend who's one of these busy fellows who can't quit work when the day is done. So, just that he might keep his idle moments occupied, he took upon his shoulders the sweet enjoyment of organizing a Boy Scout Band. He did. Then came Music Week in Denver a few years ago, and he lugged the band down there.

To find it the most wonderful problem that he'd ever struck. They'd never before seen a city. They'd never stayed at a hotel. They'd never crossed a really busy street. They'd never seen a tall building. And the climax came when one of them asked, as a street car passed:

"Say, do you suppose if I went out there and put my foot on that track, it'd burn it? "

Which, however, is not an evidence of the backwoods, nor of ignorance, or of lack of educative facilities, for education is a fetish in the hills. It is simply because of the mountains, the spell of them, their holding power. They shut one in, they grasp one; there is nothing else beyond the steep wall which they throw about one's life. It is the end — that rim in the distance; it is sufficient — the mountains!

And so, knowing what was in his heart, we took Charlie forth into the wide, wide world, in spite of the fact that he had confessed that he really knew only the box hitch

and a few other pack ties gained from his work of lugging down wood in the winter. But for that matter, there are many who say that they know the various ties of the old-time pack outfit, but who fail miserably when the time comes for really tying them. The diamond hitch — a conglomeration of twists and loops and knots that are not knots at all, which hold steadily tighter with every new strain put upon them, yet which seemingly fall apart with a single yank at the proper spot — is rapidly taking its place in the regions of the extinct. The Forest Ranger usually knows — for he studies a book which gives him the details; now and then one will find an old prospector or sheep man, or perhaps a cow-puncher, who is up on the various ties, from the simple box tie on through the list to the squaw hitch, the half diamond, the full diamond and even that dodo-like thing, the double diamond. But his kind is not cluttering up the trail these days, by any means.

For that matter, such ties are not needed in these days of packing, for the subject matter is not there to be tied. The greater use of panniers — the packer calls them “panyards” — with their boxlike apertures which hold every conceivable thing that a person can lug along, the flat throw of bedding lying over the horse’s back and easily held in place with a simple tie leading to a cinch — these things obviate the necessity of the complicated “throws” of other days. Far more important that a man know horses and their capacity of accomplishment, and have the faith in them necessary to the negotiation of stretches of mountainous country that to the unpracticed eye would seem impossible.

For what a horse can do, and what a horse will do if he has faith in his master, is almost inconceivable. Especially

is this true when a horse finds the master for whom he's really been waiting.

When we bought Big Major over at the Evans Ranch, the foreman let us set our own price.

"All I want you to do is to take that good-for-nothing bay away from here and never bring him back!" he announced with a disgusted wave of his arms.

"Is he bad?" asked Jack with all the innocence of a seasoned horse trader about to cut his former price in half.

"Bad?" asked the foreman. "He's worse than that. He's spooky, he's an outlaw, he's a horse fighter and everything else. Pay what you please for him. But don't you ever bring that son of a gun back to this ranch!"

So Jack cut the price to a third, and somehow we got Big Major over to Idaho Springs, where the assembled "rodeo hands" of the livery stable, perched upon the corral fence, watched him chase the rest of the horses away from their food, and decided to try him out with a saddle. They did. Some of them landed on their feet. The rest of them landed on other spots of the anatomy less resistive to bumps and bruises. After which Big Major was let alone until the day to pack out.

He bucked off his pack. Then, with the burden replaced, he made one wild *chassé*, and we caught him down at the ball park, a mile below town. After that, existence was one sweet dream of careening horseflesh, until Big Major met Charlie.

It was love at first sight. More than that, it was worship, at least, on the part of the horse wrangler, to be followed by a marvelous discovery.

"Know what's wrong with that horse?" asked Charlie, as he and all his spurs came into camp one evening. "I've just been sittin' out there studyin' it over. And I've tried

it out too," he added. "You see, he must have been beaten up awful at some time in his life — before he ever went over there to the ranch. That's why they didn't know what was wrong with him. Somebody must've just tore the daylights out of him around the head. Well, the result is that whenever anybody makes a quick move around him, he thinks he's going to get beat up again an' so he just protects himself. What you want to do is that stuff they do in the movies, whatucallit? "

"Slow motion? " I asked.

"That's it. Slow motion. Then he don't get scared."

"Then you do it," said Jack, as he stuck his metal mirror in the loose bark of a near-by spruce in lieu of a nail and prepared to shave. "I've had enough of him. You will too the first time we get in trouble."

But Charlie thought otherwise. Day after day he worked with Big Major, always in slow motion. Day after day he reported his progress, while we listened, merely from politeness. We knew that the instant the outfit got into difficulty that the first horse to go plunging into the free and untamed, leaving his pack behind, would be Big Major. He was just built that way. Then came Lake Pass.

The Forest Service had been frank enough to say that they didn't think we could make it. The one or two mountaineers whom we had met along the way had shaken their heads when we talked of crossing it. At best it was little more than a sheep trail, winding up a sheer, vicious saddle where there was little else but rock, and the snow lay heavy there this year. If the trail should be snowed in —

But we went on, higher, higher toward Red Mountain, with its bloody crest sticking above the heavy, carmine-stained drifts which draped its head. Then to the left,

where Grizzly Mountain rose, ugly, aloof, menacing, its snow seeming to stand upright in fluted columns, and to the left of that Lake Pass. A straight up-and-down affair, it seemed from the distance a thing of impossibilities, rising out of the willows which, choked with snow themselves, formed the headwaters of a burbling stream. The trail was gone, buried under drifts twenty feet deep. But far at one end a rock slide, starting sheer at the top, flattened slightly, losing itself at last in the willows. For that we headed.

The horses did not rebel. They only snorted their concern, and with mincing, careful steps, slowly began the ascent. Soon we were on our feet, leading them, the ascent taking us now into tangled masses of rock where even we stumbled; but the horses came faithfully on.

Higher, higher, with the slide becoming more precipitous in its grade. Now and then, when we would halt to allow the horses to blow, the three of us would go laboriously ahead, rolling the greater stones out of the way of ascent, then standing and watching them like awestruck boys, as crashing their echoes to the snowy hills about, they would go thundering down into the distance-filmy willows. Or fill deceptive holes with smaller rocks, or bank a precipitous portion that our mounts might at least have a footing. Then the grueling, precarious journey would go slowly onward.

Still higher, until the roughened, flat portion of the rock slide which first we had treaded now seemed, from this height, as smooth as a motor highway; until the trail through the willows was a mere ribbon. And before us loomed the Obstacle.

A drift lay above. A drift lay below. Between them was only a narrow strip of black, seepage-moistened soil, its

grade almost perpendicular, it seemed, its base treacherous and slimy as we floundered across it, then across again, that we might create at least a semblance of a trail for the horses. There was no chance for leading an animal; the stumbling man in front might cause the beast behind him to turn ever so slightly, and that meant disaster. It fell to Spot and myself to try it out, and we went across, while my pack horses, Barney and Baldy, came trailing behind. Three were over — and the course free, at least to the tremendous drifts atop the pass itself where, fighting snow blindness from the dazzling sun of late June, we might shovel through to the downward trail. Four horses were left. Over went Jack and Little Major, with the black — in all the trip he had no name that could go through the mails. And then came Charlie and Freida and Big Major.

We waited, anxious, calling to Charlie meanwhile to keep a loose hold on that pack rope.

"Goin' to," came the faint voice of the wrangler. "Tain't that he's spooked. But his hind legs 've been givin' out on him. Them panyards is heavy. On that last stretch there, I thought sure he was goin' — giddap, Freida! "

And Freida was over, while in the center of the slimy barrier a great bay slipped, struggled heroically for a footing, gained it, slipped again, and then, weakened legs no longer able to obey, swung wide while the pack rope swished from Charlie's hands, and we stood there, watching a magnificent piece of horseflesh go crashing down, turning over and over in the mad descent.

We did not cry out. We did not even make a motion. One is too tired, too heartbroken in such times as this to do the ordinary thing. We merely stood and watched —

watched the flying legs of him, the arching of his back as he gained his feet for an instant and struggled with all the desperation of a doomed thing for a secure footing, only that he might swerve again, and then, loose rocks crashing and screeching on their thousand-foot descent, go tumbling onward. Then suddenly a cry from Charlie — choked; he moved a hand awkwardly, as though it could express what his lips had failed to do.

“He’s made it!”

Far below, upon a ledge barely three feet wide, his packs awry, his legs braced, Big Major had come to his feet and was holding his position — for a time at least. Jack and I could see but little hope in it all. A wrong motion and he would go on again; and this time there would be no stepping until his body would lie motionless a thousand feet below. But even as we watched, a form had started slowly downward. Charlie was on the way to his beloved horse.

“I’ll get him,” he called. “There’s a chute off there to the left — I can work him up it.”

“Yeh, if you can hold him long enough to straighten what packs are left,” said Jack, “we’ll —”

“No! Don’t you come!” Charlie had halted with his hands in the air. “Don’t you come. He’s liable to spook. Then he’ll go on over. But I’ll get him.” Then slowly he went on, making his pace more and more snail-like as he approached the snorting, quivering beast. “Easy, Boy!” he called softly. “Easy, Major, Ole Boy. It’s just Charlie. I ain’t goin’ to hurt you — easy, Boy!”

His pace became like that of some mechanical thing, a leg moving inch by inch, an arm and body following it. At last he was within five feet of the horse — then slowly closer — closer.

A half-hour later, Jack and I halted in our task of shoveling at the top of Lake Pass and turned our burning, snow-reddened eyes toward welcome figures coming over the brow of the hill — Big Major and Charlie, on the trail once more. And somehow it was only fitting when, weeks later, a long, long journey was completed, that Big Major, no longer an outlaw, and Charlie, grinning with happiness in his new possession, should go away together, to work upon the Evans Road.

For one does become attached to horses that have been through the mill with him. When, for instance, they have carried him over ledges where the drop is two thousand feet downward, or through deadfall, and snow, and marsh and bog and rock slide. When the touch of the spur has sent them into swollen torrents, there to fight their way across on insecure footings, and at last, on the other side, carry the outfit onward. One even comes to love such animals as the black, even though he hasn't a name for him that can be mentioned in any publication which must submit to postal regulations.

For the black was just one of those things. The first time he deliberately walked out on the side of a mountain with the most valuable pack in the whole outfit on his back, gave a queer little bob of his head, a wave of his tail, tripped over a log and rolled fifty feet down the side, it was serious. When we got him to his feet and he slipped and landed side down, with his head under a few logs which necessitated chopping away, we decided that he was just unfortunate. Then when we had gotten him clear once more and I had moved the deadfall of half a mountain to provide an upward trail for him, and he had taken one look, reared and fallen straight backwards into the creek, we knew he was our Secret Sorrow.

He was just built for trouble, was the black. By the time he had draped himself on the other side of a few trees and nearly yanked Jack's arm from its socket, we decided to let him run free in his own childish way. Which he did, sometimes hanging back until we would be forced to stop the train for him and send one man back to herd him into line again. But let the outfit halt to reconnoiter a bad stretch of ground before us, and there would be the black, bobbing his head, with tail arched, knocking every pack horse in the string out of the way so that he could go plowing through into a mess of trouble.

We tried to sell him in Leadville, but nobody seemed anxious. High upon Castle Pass in the Sapinero country, we met a sheep outfit and tried to trade him. But the long-mustached old boss could see in him nothing more valuable than a lame mule, and a white mule at that — providing we'd throw in five dollars to boot. In Glenwood Springs we tried to give him away. No use. Two days later, we were high upon the Flat Tops, balked by snow, and working our way down a rock slide to the trail again — a slide where every step must be a careful one, and where there was danger.

To every one but the black! He started at the end of the string. He knocked Big Major scrambling, as he scraped past him, tangling their packs. He skirted Barney and Little Major and Baldy with the grace and abandon of a string-halted elephant, skidded on a pile of shale rock, bumped into my pack horse, wound himself in the halter rope, unwound himself as rapidly, reached a spot within three feet of the bottom, stumbled, fell, picked himself up again and then, loping gaily, headed for a spot of green at the edge of the drift and there, pack and all,

rolled to his heart's content — until I got behind him and shot.

And then we knew his aim in life — to furnish the comedy, and after that the blankety, blank blank black was not for sale.

For one laughs easily on an expedition where there is hard work and risks and excitement. One laughs as easily as one sleeps or as one eats. Nor is it a laugh to escape seriousness, for after all, one does little worrying. There's always your horse, and your faith in him, and the innate knowledge that somehow he'll get you to where you want to go, even though that going seems impossible. There's not even a qualm, a fear; as long as he's willing to take the chance, somehow you feel that everything's all right. We carried quite a medical kit on our journey off the trail, Jack and Charlie and I. We had everything that a smattering of surgery, gained in police reporter days and a constant attendance in an emergency hospital, could recommend. We opened that medical kit twice.

Once was when the black fell into the euphoniously named Soap Creek, and lay there taking sips of water until we could rope him out, while the packs grew wetter and wetter, which necessitated opening the kit to dry it out. The other was when Charlie came running into camp, made one fell swoop, grabbed the iodine bottle and disappeared on the run — to kill two woodticks that he'd discovered on his beloved Big Major!

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GEM OF THE ROCKIES

SATURDAY night, in a Colorado mining camp of twenty-five years ago, was a thoroughly riotous affair. Especially Nevadaville, perched high against a mountain of gold, with the very gravel of the streets containing enough pay dirt to afford a living if one cared to go to the trouble of lugging the water with which to placer it; with a thousand men working at the top of the hill, two hundred more laboring a bit farther down, and several score shaft houses and tunnel openings giving forth the remainder of several thousand get-rich-quick souls who, on such a night as this, flooded into town with their week's pay and an urgent desire to celebrate.

As a result, the pianos banged in the thirteen saloons as only a saloon piano can bang. Sometimes a six-gun banged also, with but scant attention being given its barking. Fingers often grow mischievous when there have been five or six drinks too many. Lights blazed in dance halls, in gambling "emporiums", in the abodes of the inevitable feminine accompaniments of a mining camp, and along a substantial street of well-constructed buildings of stone and brick which formed the business district and where, until midnight, hurrying proprietors and rushing clerks attended to the mercantile wants of what was destined to be a town that would make her mark in the world, to stand forth — as the orators said — a Beacon Light of Progress, an Inspirational Goddess in the Firma-

ment of Commerce, a Priceless Gem in the Diadem of a State of Opportunity.

All of which Nevadaville celebrated on Saturday night as only a Priceless Gem could celebrate. Mine owners rubbed shoulders with muckers as they edged to the crowded bars and ordered their champagne or beer, as their craving dictated. Languages intermingled in heterogeneous jargon: the Italian from "The Patch"; the accent of the high-caste Englishman, following the desire which seems innate with that nationality to gamble for earth-bound riches; the scattering "haitches" of the Cornishman or "Cousin Jack", transplanted from the tin mines of Cornwall to the gold fields of Colorado, the "Wal, now, Stranger" of the professional Westerner, and now and then straight United States. A fine time was being had by all — streets crowded, feet stamping in the dance halls, fiddles scraping, evangelists shouting their sing-song exhortations from the curbings, and standing in the door of his meat market, Jack Nankervis watched it all with young, eager eyes, which were brilliant with happiness. That day he had made twenty thousand dollars by the mere operation of buying a mine and selling it again. On the range just over the hill was a herd of his beef cattle being fattened for consumption by this teeming, gold-excited little town. Likewise a few thousand head of sheep. His market was the resting place for thousands upon thousands of dollars — money deposited with him by various miners, to do with as he chose in his various enterprises, and withdrawn without interest as the depositors desired. The world was good, and as Jack gazed proudly upon the roaring, bustling camp, he sneered and turned again to a grizzled man with whom, a moment before, he had been in earnest conversation.

"There's just one trouble with you," he said. "You're crazy! "

The older man laughed.

"All right, Son," he said, as he prepared to join the throng in a near-by saloon. "But just you wait. I may not live to see it — but you will. Then you'll know! "

"Just the same, you're crazy," came the retort, and they parted — while the town roared on.

Not so long ago, Jack again stood in front of his meat market in Nevadaville. I was with him: two men a bit fagged from our long pack trip in the high country of the Rockies, halting in our homeward journey that we might pay a visit to Jack's old town. My partner sighed.

"And do you know," he said. "I wouldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. Why, the California was working several hundred men, to say nothing of all the other mines. But we stood right here, right where you and I are standing now, and he put his hand on my shoulder, and he said, 'Jack, my boy, I'll never live to see it, but you will. You'll live to see the day when the grass is growing in these streets, and the owls roosting in the buildings.' And here we are," came slowly, "looking at it now."

For there was no town of Nevadaville. Only Jack and myself, standing before windowless buildings — and down the street, Charlie, telling his charges that they'd fall and break their legs if they continued to insist upon walking the rotten, board sidewalks in their avidity for the succulent grass which grew between its plankings.

Gone the thirteen saloons, the thronging crowds, the bedizened women. Gone the evangelists, the miners, the operators. A solid line of brick buildings stood there in

gaunt ghostliness, their ceilings sagging from the inroads of roof-leakage, their windows long ago broken, to admit the whining wind of the high country, droning as if in a relentless requiem. High upon the hill stood the two churches with their pews, their organs, their song books, even their altar cloths remaining — but their congregations had departed; the schoolhouse still held its desks, its blackboards, and even the daily lessons chalked thereon — but there were no pupils. While fringed about the town upon what enthusiasts had been wont to call the richest square mile in the world, were the smokeless stacks of shaft houses, and the pockmarks of a hundred dump heaps discoloring from the effects of erosion; but nowhere the mark of habitation. The houses which once had sheltered thousands — some lowly, some pretentious — stood, row upon row, upon a plane of vacancy. Gone — the town, the people, the life, the feverish hopes of the future, when a Priceless Gem of the Rockies would make her mark in the world. The grass grew in the streets as the old prospector had prophesied; there were owls' nests in the buildings which still stood sufficiently stanch to house such things; gone was everything except that which had begun Nevadaville and fostered it — the gold in the hills about her.

For gold still lingers, just as it lingers in the ground that lies adjacent to scores of towns such as Nevadaville, which stand as a monument to the gold fever in Colorado. All is not riches that is gold and silver; many another element must enter and those elements are not the same as they were a few score years ago; towns have died as a result of it. More: they have sprung from nothing, flourished, seethed with a mad desire to become important in the world, fought for their "honor", struggled



A DESERTED MINING TOWN, UNPOPULATED  
EXCEPT FOR CURIOUS VISITORS



EVERYTHING REMAINS IN THE CHURCH  
EXCEPT THE CONGREGATION

Benjamin Clark Cowie  
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for their prestige, sent forth their citizens to places of importance in the world, occupied their space in the news of the day and of the year, exerted their influence upon their country, and gone to nothing again, all within the space of an ordinary lifetime. One of the things which interested Jack and myself, while packing along the Continental Divide, was the deserted towns of Colorado — for there are probably more such towns in the Rocky Mountain regions of this State than in any other commonwealth in the country. We found them by the score, ranging in a state of preservation that ran the gamut — some where only the foundations still remained, or where a few rotten logs still were visible to tell the story of the founding of a town; others which seemed to have been deserted but yesterday, with pictures still hanging upon the walls of the dwellings, the glassware still on the back bars of the saloons, the piano still standing in a corner of the dance hall. And all these, from the worst to the best, had come to life, flourished and died, all within seventy years!

Within about a quarter of a mile from my home is a monument. It is a boulder, set in cement and carrying largely the appearance of a well-groomed Greeley potato, but it really is a monument, and it stands in honor of the fact that in January, 1859, a man named George A. Jackson came up Clear Creek and Chicago Creek to this point, thawed the gravel with a camp fire, dug it out with his hunting knife, "panned" it in his coffee cup, and found gold. While over the hill, near Central City, his partner, Gregory, was doing about the same thing, with the result that when the news became known in the spring, Messrs. Jackson and Gregory had plenty of company. It is since that day that the history of the ghost towns of

the Rockies has been written, from the proverbial cradle to the more proverbial grave.

A history with many chapters — for the story of the ghost towns of the Rockies is a progressive affair. They were not all built at once, these towns; they came instead with the various progressive discoveries of gold or of silver, and departed in much the same manner. Like the horse which looks over the fence and sees greener grass on the other side, so did the miner of other days continually cast his eyes to the farther hills, and wonder just how much gold or silver they contained. Having wondered, he set forth, to disappear forever, or to return disheartened to the old camp, or to come galumphing in some fine night, assemble all the dance-hall girls of the community, drink until thoroughly polluted and, under the sincere and friendly urging of some gentle soul with painted lips and tinsel on her skirt, divulge the news of a new diggings where the gold lay crusted in the quartz and a man had a chance to become rich overnight. Whereupon, the lady of the luring lips told her gentleman friend, and the gentleman friend, having surer ways of making money than digging for it, told every miner and prospector he could find, with the result that by the time the original discoverer recovered from his hang-over, a new rush was on, a new town in the making, and petitions already in circulation for a railroad. Things moved fast when it came to building towns in the old days.

There wasn't the pause for consideration which exists to-day. To procure a railroad to a new community in these times is quite a task. Evidently folks were not so conservative back in the days when every mountain of the Rockies was supposed to contain gold. To him who wanders over the hills, drifting from the main traveled

roads, there is many a silent story in the serrated lines where once a railroad ran, but where now is only the embankment and the marks where ties have rotted — the rails long ago having traveled the way of the junkman. These are the ghost roads that ran to the ghost towns — to be pushed forward by herculean efforts of night and day labor, over grades that were all but prohibitive, across canyons, through forests — at last to reach the object of desire, thrive for a few years, then decline with the sickening Gem of the Rockies which it had struggled so desperately to reach. But for that matter, everything was feverish in those days, which accounts, perhaps, for the popularity of mining, the growth of towns which would not stay grown, and the death of them, together with a little different aspect in the present-day systems of gaining riches from the ground.

It wasn't gold and silver alone which lay behind the frenzies of the early days in mining. There were other things, equally important, such as a national unrest. There were frontiers in those days, and something beyond the horizon. The man of Illinois, for instance, who had come into that country as a pioneer and builded his farm to a paying proposition, would hear of better lands farther on, in the "bottoms" of Missouri, where the corn grew so tall that persons could be lost for days in it. Whereupon, he gathered his family, called the dog, locked the door of his cabin and was off for new fields of conquest. There was continually the thrill of a new country, and new money to be made from it — something always a little better a bit farther on, and the natural urge to benefit thereby. Those were the days of the poor man and the "poor man's chance", when land was free and the government begging by every possible form of propaganda —

although it wasn't called by such a rude name then — for hardy souls to settle it; when a man worked by labor for a dollar a day, and when ten times that much meant that one was "well to do." Hence the popularity of the old-style type of mining, once the secret of Messrs. Jackson and Gregory became known to the world, the chance of "big money."

It wasn't a matter of riches. The persons in the old days who really became immensely wealthy from gold and silver, were not numerous. But there was the chance to become "comfortably fixed", to gain perhaps a stake of a few thousand dollars — and the flood ran on.

Such things couldn't happen to-day. For one thing, ten or fifteen dollars a day, gained from living in a hovel, grubbing at the earth and rock from sunup to sundown, foregoing conveniences and even suffering privations, isn't the popular thing that it once was. Persons can make ten or fifteen dollars a day by easier methods, and even if the reward were twice as great, the God of Convenience has slowly but surely taken America within its grasp. Over under James Peak, for instance, the State of Colorado is financing the building of a six-mile tunnel through the Rocky Mountains to facilitate transportation to a rich and fertile country now served only by the tortuous climb of the Moffat Road, which, writhing and twisting through tunnels and snowsheds, around the sides of mountains, up gulches and along canyons, finally reaches the very top of the Continental Divide and goes down the other side — for the Moffat Road was built in those days when an impediment such as a range of mountains meant very little to a pioneer.

Or as Jack and myself pictured it one day on Rollins Pass, long disused, filled with deadfall, and with grades

so stiff that the muscles stood forth upon our horses like whipcords as they struggled to surmount them. In the old days a stagecoach ran over that road, and as we fought its grades, we strove to visualize the crossing of the continent by such precarious means. At last, however, we struck a slight stretch where a cut had been made, lessening the grade slightly, and as we rode along it, Jack turned with a laugh.

"Can't you see old Rollins when he ordered that cut?" he asked. "Probably hollered his head off. Came out to the workmen and let out a growl like a she-bear and jammed his hands in his pockets. Then probably told 'em: 'This here country's gettin' so damn full o' tender-feet there ain't no use livin' in it. Been kicking again on this grade. Guess we'll have to humor 'em. Cut the whole damn thing down to thirty-five per cent!'"

For grades meant little in the old days, and inconvenience meant less. Things have changed now, with the result that the people of the northwestern part of the State objected to the fact that snow and winter and a Continental Divide sometimes closed down the railroad for days at a stretch, and now and then for several weeks. It's not in accord with present-day standards to start home with a week's shopping under one arm and get there fourteen days late. So the State of Colorado is remedying the mistake of Dave Moffat, the empire builder, and is prospectively cutting a six-mile tunnel through the Rockies.

To do this, it must have men, men to whom it will pay the highest wages. For these it has built a little town at each portal of the tunnel, with bunk houses, bathhouses, moving-picture shows, radio and every possible convenience that a frontier town can afford. But there's the trouble!

A frontier town! Without the pavements, the lights, the ready conveniences of the city; with bitter weather; without homes, as people of to-day know homes; with present-day comforts put up in the packages of yesterday. As a result, the trucks run often to Denver, bringing forth new men to take the places of others who would rather have the softer life of the present day than the money which goes with the discomforts of time departed.

The old incentive is gone. The flag-waving has departed. Now to live the life of the frontier, one simply puts up with privations and gets little glory. In the past, it was different. Towns popped into existence overnight, and departed almost as readily. But while they lived, they were as important as New York or Paris or London. Were they not the Gems of the Rockies, with the greatest future that ever a little town of their kind had known?

This spirit was paramount; it existed in all these queer little spots of habitation which now, in varied degrees of desolation, spot the Rockies from Carbonate, far in the western part of the State, to Nevadaville and American City in the east, from Pearl and Lulu and their companions in the north on down to Vulcan and Tin Cup and Gothic in the south; deserted Gems in the Priceless Diamond — gems which turned out to be glass.

But as long as they glittered, so long did the pride gleam in the eyes of those who formed their population. Nor mattered it that they had been founded overnight; all that was forgotten. Forgotten entirely the fact that a rumor had gone forth, drifting upon western winds. That men who followed mining as a livelihood had heard that rumor, looked upon an equally Priceless Gem with fading love, then had pulled up stakes and gone forth to a new diggings and to a new civic pride which would bloom and

blossom until some other charmer took it away. Those towns of the early days were affairs of deadly seriousness as long as they lasted.

As was a mine rush, for that matter, running almost to a formula. First the discovery. Then the visit to Denver, or the nearest town where life ran swift and crude. The parting with the secret. The spreading of that secret by the gamblers and hangers-on, for they too continually wanted new fields in which to work; after a town grew to a certain age, some perverted soul was always getting a wild idea about the abolition of gambling, the closing of places of illicit amusement and the general curbing of the "lawless element." But in a new town it was always possible for the saloon keepers to run things — for a while at least; hence new towns were popular.

And new towns were fostered, with the result that the announcement of a strike meant immediately a rush of miners, followed almost as suddenly by a heavier rush of hangers-on — saloon keepers, traders, women of a — well, that kind of women — gamblers, peddlers, dance-hall proprietors, and in short an entire coterie of camp followers who could be counted upon to furnish the general population, until things became more tame and miners sent for their families. And of course, the sawmill.

The sawmill was inevitable. One sees its mark everywhere about the deserted towns of the Rockies to-day; one gauges his approach to such a spot of desolation by the desolation he strikes, running mile upon mile, before ever he reaches the final scene — the desolation of the sawmill. Wood meant nothing then, and wood meant everything; the first cuttings of pine boughs formed the shelter for the first saloon; the first slabs formed the bar — and after that, the building of the city.

Lumber for the houses. Lumber for the sidewalks. Lumber for every conceivable purpose, even to the fuel of the smelters, which seemed to trail the mining camp of the old days with almost as much persistence as that of the gambler and the saloon keeper. Lumber and wood for this and that and the other thing, until the forests crumbled, and until to-day, with whitened stumps, with bare reaches where once the needles of pine and spruce lay like a downy carpet beneath spreading branches, these barren fields stand like so many graveyards, heralding the ghosts which await, a few miles farther on.

However, denuded forests and general desertion made little difference when there were gold and silver and a new town — with all its possibilities — in the offing. A new town. A new Gem of the Rockies. To be regarded seriously, to be worked for, labored for, even fought for! Even as Teller fought for her life and Grand Lake fought for hers.

Some say that it was because Teller people just didn't like the Grand Lake county commissioners. Others, like Sam Weed, who attended the conferences which went before and who paused in the midst of his haying up Elk River to tell me about it, say that it was because Teller wanted the county seat. Teller was an important town, resting as it did in North Park, advantageously situated, with good ore practically at its town limits, the promise of a railroad and the hope of becoming a Gateway of Commerce. So important and with such tremendous problems constantly confronting it that for a time there was a dead line, and those on each side of that line carried guns, loaded for but one purpose, — to kill their neighbors on the other side.

“And the only reason they didn't have a regular mas-

sacre," said Sam Weed, as he forked another load of alfalfa upon the waiting hayrack, "was that everybody knew that the minute a shot was fired, everybody in town 'd be killing somebody else. Lots of times a hand would go to a holster and stop there, because that fellow knew that if he'd ever pull his gun, somebody else would pull one too, and he'd be killed with the rest of them."

So with all this importance, and with the seriousness of the town's future at heart, there arose a quarrel with Grand Lake, the county seat. That quarrel grew, for here was a matter of right and liberty and justice, and the future of a Gateway of Commerce. One night armed men left Teller and went to Grand Lake. Armed men of Grand Lake met them. When the shooting was over, several men were dead, with the honors about even, men who had died that the future of their beloved towns might live.

To-day Grand Lake is a little summer resort, hibernating in the winter. While on the rutty road of the Grand County side of Willow Pass, Jack and myself paused one day to gaze at a Forest Service sign — a sign which told its story simply and plainly as it marked the beginning of a meandering and little-used trail. It said:

## OLD TELLER NINE MILES

Back in other times, it might have been the cause of a shooting to have referred to such a City of Opportunity as Old Teller. Now it doesn't make much difference. No one is there to object!

Dead. As others have died. And yet, why should a town die, if the gold is there, or the silver still lies in the veins,

and as the prospector, stage and real, so often proclaims:  
"Them hills is still full o' gold, Pardner! "

For many reasons. One is, of course, that gold isn't the precious thing it once was. True, it still will bring twenty dollars an ounce, month in and month out, at the United States Mint, but then, twenty dollars isn't the same old twenty dollars that it used to be. It won't buy as much, and it costs more to produce, at least, in mining; and twenty dollars' worth of gold has not increased one cent in value since the days when George Jackson first found the yellow metal in his pan, while the coffee cup in which George did his panning would cost from three to four times as much to-day as when he set forth upon his expedition, back in 1859. That's one reason why hills can be full of gold and yet not worth the mining; why shaft houses often are deserted, mills idle, houses and towns deserted, when there is still the vein in the faithful old mine, the timbers still firm, and perhaps a tram car full of gold-bearing ore still standing on the track at the ore bins — not worth dumping and hauling to the sampler.

The explanation lies in the simple fact that mining isn't all romance and that gold mines are rarely things which are struck, gleaming and Cræsus-like at the grass roots, just in time to lift the mortgage on the dear old farm. Instead, mining, whether it be for iron, for copper, for silver or for gold, is just a commercial proposition, like the raising of potatoes, or the selling of dry goods, with a margin of profit and loss as in any other business. When prices of labor, of powder, of freight, of smelting and the other ingredients which enter into mining, rise to a point where it costs more to produce a ton of ore than one can get for it, then mining stops. And since most mining towns live on mining alone, the population cannot simply

sit there and wait for mining to "open up" again, because mining has a habit of lying dormant for years at a time. So the outward trek begins, always, however, with the idea of coming back, perhaps in a month, perhaps in a year.

I know a man, for instance, who owns a mine. Not so long ago, he took me down into it and showed me seventy-five thousand tons of ore "blocked out", as they say in mining communities, which means that it is within easy reach. That man was not as rich as he was in other days, when his mine was running. He'd be bankrupt if he should ever take out that seventy-five thousand tons of silver-bearing ore and send it to the smelter. The ore is worth about eighteen dollars a ton. According to his figures, it would cost him \$18.50 a ton to produce it. That seventy-five thousand tons, if he mined it, would mean a straight loss of thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars. Of course, if times should change, and one little detail drop in price so that he could mine that ore for \$17.50 a ton -- ! It is upon such things as this that the success of mining often hinges, not upon the bonanza strikes that one so often reads about in the come-on advertisements of crooked mine promoters. Those are fiction things, and they should have their place in fiction; they happen so rarely.

So it is the commercial angle -- in spite of all the romance of the boom days -- which so often accounts for the fact that one wanders a rutted road in the high Rockies, a road disused for years, finally to see resting in a gulch a tatterdemalion collection of buildings, surrounded by mines from which the smoke and steam no longer issue. The gold may still be there, or the silver may still lie in the rock, but times and costs have changed,

and mining in that particular district is not profitable. More than one millionaire of the old days was made by the simple fact that his ore ran in wide veins and allowed him a profit of two or three dollars a ton, far more millionaires than those which were made by fabulous strikes. When the profit departed, the mine shut down, thus concluding another chapter.

Then, too, methods have changed in mining since the days when boom towns were bursting upon the horizon every few months. No longer are the hills filled with prospectors, willing to give years of their lives for the thrill of finding a new vein. The cheap stock public — meaning that wonderful army of suckers that has contributed to every confidence game from the Old Army Game to the patent Automatic Sewing Machine Adjuster — got a bit fed up on mining some years ago. There even came into being the stock joke about papering houses with mining stock, with the result that professional boomers — and they were responsible for much of the early-day excitement — found things not so good as they had been and stopped boring holes in the ground. So another shaft house closed its doors and men looked elsewhere for work, leaving their houses unlocked as they trekked onward.

And besides all this, there just isn't the spirit of the old days; there isn't the excitability, the gullibility. The country has become more stable. When the boom towns that are now the ghost towns of the Rockies came into being, there were various things to make men want to wander. There was the unstableness of government, for instance, aroused first by the Slave Question, and then by the Civil War. There was the pioneer spirit. And above all this, there was the knowledge that a great part of Western America had not been thoroughly explored, and

it was quite the fashion and quite romantic to be one of those who had gone into far countries and seen strange things. Now a few adventures rarely cause a ripple; there are too many cracking good murders occupying the front page, and too many hints in the rest of the paper on how to take a vacation without ever moving off an automobile cushion, for the business of roughing it to occupy much attention. To say nothing of the systems of mining, themselves.

There are no longer the boomers. There are no longer the "long shot" men, striking it rich and spending their money as fast as they get it. Slowly, mining has become a business, with a dozen or more colleges turning out embryo mining engineers, with cost sheets and trial balances and auditing systems and all that sort of thing, with profits and losses figured just as the profits and losses of any other business would be computed — and one cannot very well become excited about such things as that. It would be as difficult in these days to start a real mining rush, such as was a common occurrence fifty years ago, as it would have been difficult fifty years ago to have used the same business methods that now are employed in getting ore out of the ground and to the smelter. Nor does that apply only to gold and silver. Even the most unusual of things hardly causes a ripple. As an example:

A friend of mine sat in his office in Idaho Springs one day, very well satisfied with life. Some time before he had taken a lease upon an old mine in which he had faith, and with some friends had worked in through to the vein. Then he had taken a few sacks of samples and brought them down to the assay office, placing the best looking — and the least valuable one — in his window, merely because it was pretty. Now he had received the

report of the assayer, and sat with his feet on his desk, reading the little telltale sheet and puffing contentedly upon his pipe with the air of a man who owns the world. The assay had shown that the vein ran in the neighborhood of \$128.00 a ton in silver and lead, which meant that he had found a paying proposition in a mine, and that, in spite of the excessive costs of this particular hole in the ground, there would be a good profit in working the property.

The world was good. The mining man puffed more and more contentedly. The door opened and a stranger entered.

"What's that stuff you've got in your window?" he asked. The mine owner turned lazily.

"Oh, some lead ore from my mine," he answered. "Won't you sit down?"

"No, thanks." The stranger seemed slightly excited. "I'm from Los Angeles. In the radio business. Mind if I take a little piece of that stuff down to Denver and test it?"

My friend laughed. Lead ore, at the sampler, was bringing eight cents a pound.

"Take the whole thing," he announced, and against the other man's protestations, forced it on him. "I've got a whole mine full of the blamed stuff. Pretty, isn't it?"

The visitor said that it was and hurried away. That night there came a telephone call from Denver, to which the mining man listened with popping eyes. His "lead ore" had tested out; would he make a contract with the visitor to deliver him ore as needed at two thousand dollars a ton?

When the haze had cleared, my friend, with that trading instinct which all mine owners seem to possess,

had refused the offer, and was gasping at the possibility of a young fortune. His "lead ore" was in truth lead. But it was a peculiar kind of lead, that which is known in the radio industry as steel-silver galena, being a mixture of exceedingly fine lead crystals mixed with silica and held together by sulphides, its place in the radio business being that of furnishing the crystals upon which the small boy — and the rest of the family — tickles the cat's whisker and receives radio reception of near-by stations for a few dollars instead of the hundreds sometimes expended upon an expensive set. But when the news became known and drifted to the other mining camps of the state that a high grade of steel galena ore had been discovered, was there any rush of frenzied galena seekers tramping the hills in an effort to find the same kind of stuff? Nary a rush!

In more ancient times, it all would have been different. The mine owner, if he had been of the old stock, would promptly have rushed to the bank, procured a double handful of currency, stuffed bills in his hatband, his buttonholes and affixed them in protruding fashion to the every pocket of his clothing. Then he would have made the rounds of the saloons, buying drinks for the house, the procession gradually resolving itself into a parade in which the whole town joined. Following which, there would have been a keg party, with the happy discoverer of riches in the rôle of chief bartender. And after that, a grand, concerted rush to the region of the mine, with every grocery store of the town grubstaking wild-eyed prospectors who announced to the heavens and every one else who would listen that they were the only real persons on earth who could tell steel galena when they saw it; with a stock-selling bee bursting immediately forth on every hole in the ground within three miles of the discovery

hole, and with excitement in general. But such things don't happen to-day. The mining man announced his good luck. Some congratulated him and some didn't. He investigated his markets, sold his ore, took his money — and that was that.

So, in this calmer day, there is not the incentive for the birth of the boom town, nor of its continuation, while there are plenty for its demise. Not that mining is dead; instead, within the last year, there have been indisputable evidences of a healthy and lasting revival. But it is a different mining, a calmer mining, a saner mining, and there isn't room for the dance hall, the boom stock seller, and the wild-eyed enthusiast looking for riches in every discolored stone.

Therefore, when the new era came, boom towns died. True, some of them departed because the ore actually did not pan out, such as Carbonate, which once wanted to be a county seat in Western Colorado, and which now stands upon the flat tops of the Rockies, near Glenwood Springs, merely so many rotting logs and caved-in buildings. Even the stream which once served it as a water supply has changed its mind and tumbles along in a different direction. The cutting of the forests to build this wonder-town of the Rockies changed the direction in which the snow drifted during the bleak winter months, so that even July finds the remains of a Priceless Gem half hidden in the tremendous banks of white which refuse to yield, even to the suns of midsummer. The wagon road which once ran in tortuous fashion across the hills, and over which the commerce of a budding metropolis was to have traveled, now is not even a double rut. It is a single, filmy line, running plain and clear at times, indistinct at others, then fading completely — only a trail,

to be followed by fishermen, invading by pack train the recesses of the White River National Forest; the hunter in pursuit of his bear or his annual buck, and the plodding sheep-herder, trailing out his lazy life in the wake of his dirty, vociferous flock, as it travels voraciously onward, cleaning the ground of grass with the efficacy of a mowing machine, to the accompaniment of a continuous blatting which, from a distance, sounds for all the world like an excited World's Series grand stand with the winning run just starting.

Such is Carbonate, because the ore wasn't there — deserted, rotting, with the weeds growing through the floors of the buildings. With the wild flowers clustered in the fertility of the decomposing logs. With not even a shred of habitation, a printed word, a tin can left to tell the story of its population. And there are others, like Nevada-ville, where the ore remained, but where the water seeped into the mines from beneath, and the margin of mining profit did not allow the building of a tunnel to drain the hill. Or Teller, where hopes did not pan out. But there are many more, which died simply because they couldn't keep on living.

All have their element of tragedy, for it is not a pleasant thing when a town dies. Higher and higher it goes, in production and in excitement. Then, suddenly, a mill shuts down. The ore which it has been running, hundreds upon hundreds of tons, that a general test may be made of a certain vein, has not paid. The doors close. Then a mine stops — though, of course, it is only for a short time. But the tram cars still stand upon the track where they have been pushed for dumping, and left there by the final shift — because the mine is always going to open again in a few days, or perhaps a month. Just a shut-

down for a little while, until the price of powder is lowered, or the smelter reduces its treatment charges or —

There is always an excuse. And the aerial tram hangs halfway between the mill and the mine, hangs there week after week and month after month. The ore wagons stand in the open, where their teams have left them, as though they were to be used anew to-morrow. Jack and I stood one day by the ruins of an ancient smelter in the deserted, log-cabin town of Vulcan. The roof had caved in places from the terrific onslaughts of storms which seem a requisite of the weather in that mesa country. The stack leaned eerily. The corrugated tin sidings of the smelter house scraped and shrieked and clanged with the action of gusty winds. But out on the dump, rusting now from their exposure, stood the slag pots, half-turned and with their contents only partly dumped, where a work shift had left them years before, knowing full well that the shut-down was not of a permanent nature.

Always the hope — like the gambler who borrows one more chip for a final whirl at the roulette wheel. Always the knowledge that everything will be all right, that “she’ll open up again.” But a family leaves for another camp and another job, to be followed in twos and threes and then in scores. Day by day and week by week the dwindling process continues, while paradoxically the population of burros and goats roaming the streets now where once they were in quarters seems to increase. At last the houses stand empty, perhaps with a few ancient pieces of furniture left behind and the inevitable calendars which seem to thrive in mining camps as nowhere else — usually a chromo of a beautiful Indian maiden attired in a sort of an aboriginal teddy, spearing fish at twilight. The calendars, and the broken furniture, and the newspapers

nailed to the wall, flaunting at one the happenings which were quite exciting fifteen or twenty years ago, but which don't seem to amount to much now; the door, unlocked; the last bit of coal scooped from the shed, as though the family had waited only until it was gone before the departure! The roulette wheel, careening on one side, in the back room of the saloon; the stud-poker table leaning drunkenly beside it. The beer ice box, with its sawdust and its hundreds upon hundreds of empty bottles — but never a full one; they were frugal even in those days! After that the staring windows, the feeling, as one wanders the silent streets, that it must be a dream, that this place cannot be deserted; here are houses, and stores, and the feeling of a companionship. But it is the companionship of ghosts, of days and people that are gone; only the wind whines through the loose boardings of eroding roofs or clangs the tin of a side wall. As one halts instinctively upon leaving a house which he has entered merely from curiosity, halts with that innate feeling of having broken the law and entered that which did not belong to him, there slowly sifts through his consciousness the fact that the moving thing isn't a policeman, after all. Only a vagrant burro, or a goat leaping from shed roof to house roof in his loneliness. The house is no longer a possession. Taxes have lapsed on it long ago. The county owns it, and the county doesn't care. There's no one to buy it, and it therefore has no value.

It's deserted, except for the burros and the goats, and there comes the time when even they also depart, as their owners have departed, the burros to wander the hills until at last they drift into another and more populous camp, there to munch at lawns until the marshal is summoned and by a process of progression they pass into the hands

of new owners; the goats to form what is beginning to be a new kind of animal life in the Rockies — that of the tame gone wild. Now and then one finds a whole flock of them, high in the hills, feeding along under the guidance of a grizzled old billy who watches the approach of a human being with all the nervous vigilance which a wild thing can know, then at the sense of danger, goes blatting and bounding away, taking his band with him. During the winter months in my little town, a band of perhaps fifty appears high at the edge of the hills with the first onslaught of bitter weather. Closer and closer they creep with the passing of the days, until they are near enough to eat the salt and food which townspeople spread for them. But no nearer. They are not even as tame as the mountain sheep which annually come into the town of Ouray for escape from mountain lions and the offerings of hay, nor as companionable as the elk of Jackson's Hole. They have gone from the tame to the wild with a vengeance; the Italians of Russell Gulch hunt them as they would hunt any other creature of the forest. With the first touch of spring they disappear, not to be seen again until winter with its sweeping winds and high-country blizzards comes raging upon them anew.

Yet, there's a certain fascination about a town that has declined, an inevitable urge to see it "come back." Some years ago, when I turned from the city to the hills, there was little in my mind save the desire to get away and to be in the mountains, with their quiet and their peace. But once the novelty of this was gone, I looked about me.

Things didn't seem as alluring as they had appeared at first flush. True, the town was far from dead; strangely enough, the place where gold was first discovered and where the first camp was made never had a boom, or even

the appearance of one. It had grown steadily upon a certain amount of mining profit, and at the time of my entrance it still remained alive, although it was running a daily temperature and had every other appearance of being a rather sick community. Mining was down. Prices for everything except silver and gold had reared skyward with the War. One could not mine at profit, even in a town only thirty-eight miles from Denver, and there was the reflection on every side, in spite of the aid of a certain ranch and tourist business which at least kept the wolf from the door.

It made no difference to me personally how sick that town was. My living came from other places. Yet I found myself standing in front of the deserted houses, wondering how they would look if folks lived in them. I finally reached the place where I made feverish efforts at bringing that place back — by celebrations, by a hundred and one other devices by which something else could be made to take the place of mining and fill those houses once more. The valleys in the hills would raise lettuce — of a high paying type. It was a spot where money could be made from the development of a tourist business, according to ideas used in other communities. But the people only stared.

It wasn't mining! Of what use would all those things be when it wasn't mining? That was what counted: the ore in the hills, the miners coming down the street at four o'clock, with the muck on their clothing and their lanterns on their caps. Mining — clean money, as they called it, coming out of the hills — that was the only money worth while. And while they bewailed their fate and the sickness of the community, they waited — for mining. The time came when even I admitted the thrill

of it. The time when silver rose and other prices dropped and the town came back to the sound of hammers working upon those deserted houses; the smell of fresh paint being slapped upon wood that had not known paint for years. Mining had begun to awaken, after a dormancy of a decade, and these people who had refused to turn to other means of livelihood, these people who had been dormant even as their occupation, now were alert, living once more because their beloved mining had begun anew to breathe.

Strange, the hold of it, the sensation of it! High in my back yard is what is supposed to be a silver mine. I've been in it once — from curiosity. As for seriously owning one of the things, I — well, I wasn't built for mining. Yet when that first flush came, when the news was out that the first property was working, another one starting up, and still others clearing their shafts and ordering timber and tools and machinery, I stood one day with a genuine lump in my throat, watching a dozen ore wagons, with their four-horse teams, come lumbering slowly down Virginia Cañon with their shipment for the sampler.

One thrills as at the return of some one lost, some one long searched for, to see the dust depart from the show windows of deserted stores and trucks backed up, loading in a supply of merchandise; to see the dandelions fade from neglected yards, and lawns take the place thereon. To listen to the clump of heavy boots upon the sidewalks in the steady, swift tread of the miner as the shifts change. To hear 'Arry White, and his kind, long transported from their tin mines in Cornwall, but holding to their dialect nevertheless, standing on the corner downtown, regaling his comrades with:

“Han then, Hi says, says Hi, ‘Lor’ bless yer, ‘Arry, hif hit hain’t there, hit hain’t nowhere.’ So, Hi takes my fulminate cap han’ Hi crimps her hin me teeth, han Hi tamps ten sticks huh powder hin that bloody ’ole. ‘Hi’ll give ’er bloody ’ell,’ Hi says, han Hi signal for the shot, han’ when we goes back after we’d counted ’em hoff, gor damme, Boy, there was the bloody vein ha-layin’ right where Hi’d said it’d be! ”

A statement greeted with grunts of applause. They’re a popular being around a mining camp, these “Cousin Jacks”, for they’re the best metal miners in the world. Proud of their Cornwall training, of their dialect, of their superstitions, they know but one thing, and love it to the exclusion of all else — mining, clean money; although it is seldom that they make more of it than a day’s pay. And their advent to a town is like the first robin of a spring; it means that a town is coming back, that a revival of mining in that district at least is on the way.

A condition which is not even a remote possibility for some of the Priceless Gems of the Rockies. Many of the towns that have gone are gone for keeps, except in extremely isolated cases. The boom days are done, and with them the boom towns, year by year to become more decrepit, then slowly to rot. To-day is a different day — a day in which established towns which have suffered from a drop in mining can return with a greater or lesser degree of revival, but which gives little hope for anything else. A day as different in its methods as in its customs, as conservative as other days were wild. Less eventful in a way and less novel. For at least the old days had the advantage of being unusual, and of doing things without much regard for the rule books. To-day, for instance, a funeral is pretty much of a cut and dried affair. They’ve gotten

it down to a science. But back in the sixties, there was not as much efficiency.

It comes from the pioneers around my home town, this story of the first funeral in Idaho Springs. It happened back in those days when gold was a thing to cause excitement and send men far from their homes that they might grub it from the ground.

There were no houses; there were even few huts. Men were too busy with pick and pan and shovel at the mouth of Chicago Creek and in the various gulches to think of much more than sleeping in a tent or under a tree. Besides, there were the saloons, standing at intervals of about half a block; so many lean-tos of spruce boughs, sheltering a slab counter which held the stock in trade, a keg of whisky. At such places one could become thoroughly warm before retiring and equally warm upon arising, which was sufficient unto the day. And in the midst of this state of affairs, an inconsiderate gold seeker turned up his toes and died.

For a time after the discovery, it was a very casual affair. Some one had died, which was a common enough occurrence, certainly not of momentous concern where men were busy with real things, such as the search of gold. But as suddenly there arose a new angle, that of the sentimental.

"Just to think of it!" asked a grizzled being of a bartender as he took another drink. "To have to die, 'way out here in the wilds, away from home an' all that. Somebody ought to do something about it."

"Somebody sure ought," agreed the bartender, and bought a drink on the house. "Maybe a committee might help."

It was a great idea. After numerous other gold seekers

had been assembled, and more drinks taken, and more conversation indulged in regarding the misfortune of dying away off from home and civilization, a number of committees were appointed. There was the Committee of Grave Digging, for instance, which, having been appointed, bought a drink. Then there was the Committee on the Building of the Casket, which also did the honors. Followed by the Committee on Pallbearers which purchased a round, followed by one on the house and a speech on how terrible it was to die, away off here from civilization — and the work of the day was on.

The Committee on Grave Digging had to go to the far end of the town to assume its labors, so it took its refreshments along. The rest were handy to the source of supply, so they moved straightway to work. After a time, a funeral cortège started gravely up the street, with the town falling in — at least such of it as was not busy with the chores of grubbing gold. Onward — onward — and then a sudden halt. They had reached the first saloon and the Committee on Pallbearing suddenly had remembered, in a hazy sort of way, that something was missing. So they set the homemade casket in the middle of the street, assembled the Committee on Casket Making and the Committee on Mourning, which had been an afterthought, and went to the nearest pine-bough emporium, and got what they needed. A half block farther on, they did the same thing, and so on continuously up the street, the silent object of their consideration waiting patiently in his box in the middle of the road until more important details could be attended to and the cortège allowed to proceed.

At last came the cemetery — so named that morning when the Grave Digging Committee began its work. They

assembled at the grave. A heavy pause, with bleary-eyed miners looking from one to another, as if for a signal. At last some one suggested:

“Ought have prayer. Always ought have prayer. An’-body know Lor’s Prayer?”

Again silence. At last a volunteer, “Sure — I know Lor’s Prayer.”

“Then shay it!”

“Aw-ri’. Now I lay me down to sleep — ”

Loud vociferation! “Tha’ ain’t Lor’s Prayer.”

“Then shay it yourshelf!” came the disgruntled retort, and the matter of prayer was forthwith gracefully glossed over.

“Maybe we don’t need prayer,” said the spokesman. “Jush have a shong. Shum kin’ of a hymn.”

But nobody could remember a hymn beyond the first line, and after three attempts, in which the music trailed off in various discords, that flopped also. At last came a voice from the rear, husky with thirstiness.

“Less shing shomepin we all know,” he shouted, and followed it with a certain refrain which rose higher and higher through its verse, into the highly reverential finish:

“Ha-ha-ha, you and me! Li’l brown jug, how I love thee!”

It was something they all knew. Back in town those pine-bough emporiums were waiting, with refreshments for tired committeemen. Husky voices bawled to the towering mountains. Chests expanded into greater roaring that went on through the entire refrain, even to that verse:

Had I a cow and she gave such milk,  
I’d dress her in the finest silk,

Ha, ha, ha, you and me! Li'l brown jug, how I love thee!

Then, in the language of the miner, they gave the Late Deceased two bells, lowered him away, and went back to the more important business of the day with the full and complete knowledge that they'd done their darndest!

## CHAPTER IX

### A MILLION JUST AHEAD!

**J**ACK and I were lost — at least, we thought we were, which amounted to about the same thing. Not an extremely comfortable sensation when one is atop a mountain pass, with no grub, no outfit, no hobbles for the horses; nothing, in fact, but the slicker behind one's saddle, while across the snow fields the shadows are creeping deeper and deeper, with the closing in of night.

Our outfit was back at Cathedral, merely a wide place in the road, where a tractor clanged and roared to the accompaniment of clattering scrapers and the musical cussing of mule skinnners as, in obedience to the ever-voracious demands of a motor public, the Forest Service was blasting an automobile road along a course which formerly had been no more than the meandering route of a little-used trail, hugging the rocky sidehills along the Cebolla as it traveled, unmolested and unmolesting, through a land that would be primitive but a short time longer. Jack and I had watched the work with the air of men looking upon a sacrilege; one comes to view automobile roads in that light after one has enjoyed the unsullied stretches of the trail and compared them with the havoc which seems inevitable with the advent of gasoline. The flowers seem to grow prettier along a trail; at least there are not the gaunt holes where a columbine plant has been yanked up by its roots, or an Indian paintbrush torn from its home, to wither and be thrown away an hour later.



*Denver Tourist Bureau*

THE DESERTED TOWN OF LULU, NORTHERN COLORADO



The chipmunks scamper about one in quite a friendly way, never having had the experiences of their road brothers in dodging mighty hunters armed with twenty-two caliber rifles, and boasting that they can always hit a live target much better than they can a paper one. And there is a different sensation, as though one were on his honor. There aren't the signs along a trail that one sees upon a road: the announcement of punishment for polluting water, for strewing rubbish about Forest Service Camps, for carelessness in smoking, for catching fish under size, for dynamiting streams and lakes, for cruelty to animals and the dozen other posters which so enrage a woodsman, not because of the signs themselves but because of the idiots who make them necessary.

That was why, as Charlie, our horse wrangler, had stowed our outfits in a construction shed, Jack and I had looked rather sadly upon the feverish activities at Cathedral. Another year and a frontier of nature would have vanished. Another year and one more primeval portion of the Rocky Mountains would be given over to cars, both luxurious and tatter-demalion; more initials would be carved on trees, and more cans strewn gaily about, to say nothing of other landscape aids in the shape of fluttering newspapers, pickle containers, discarded tires and perhaps, here and there, a slatternly hovel called a mountain cottage and designated — as always — by some such original name as Dew Drop Inn.

But right now, even that would have been welcome. One of those inevitable accidents of the trail, a wrong calculation, had happened and our bright little idea of leaving the pack outfit and taking a horseback sally over the Continental Divide to the old mining town of Creede was beginning to show a few dull spots. The trail had

branched at the junction of two gulches. It was a matter of choice and we had taken that which showed hoofprints.

We followed it for miles, only to find that the horses which had made those prints were no guides whatever, but merely a runaway pair from some ranch or road camp, exploring the mountains, and left behind in the first opening in the scraggly willows which stretched upward along the draw toward the roof of the world. Then the trail had faded, in drifts and seepage and stretches of headwaters as a stream went through the throes of its beginning, in rivulets which gushed from the rock slides, springs which oozed from the drift-blackened ground, and torrents converging from the great fields of white, lying sullenly along the ridges. After that we had floundered along without any trail whatever, to cross the ridge, to make our calculations, hope that they were correct, then take heart at the faint outline of a sheep path, untraveled since the previous year. But night was coming and this tiny mark in the rocky soil might lead anywhere. Jack waved a hand toward the sloping heights above.

"Creeping spruce up there," he said. "Better bed down under it. No sense in trying to follow a blind trail at this time of day."

Then we heard the bell, and halted. The clank, clank, clank of a heavy bell as if in progress, came toward us eerily, weirdly, in the growing dusk. We waited. Closer and closer it came, at last to reveal at the opening of a near-by gulch, an undersized burro with a tremendous cowbell about his neck, while upon his back rocked a pack which seemed to contain a little of everything in the world. Beside him strode a cadaverous figure, walking loosely, as though his joints did not mesh properly, his white-bearded face shielded by a tattered black hat, and

upon his loose frame a collection of clothing that was more in keeping with the costume of a vaudeville tramp than of a legitimate being; red patch set against black patch and this against gray; patches dovetailed, one into the other; at times the basic cloth was lost entirely in a maze of cross-stitching and haphazard design until it could be compared to nothing but a patchwork quilt.

They served as a means of identification, those patches. We'd seen them before, upon like beings, coming suddenly out of silent gulches in the hills. So we talked guardedly as we made our inquiries and learned that the wagon road which led through the deserted town of Bachelor and on to Creede was but a quarter of a mile away and that we could make it easily before complete darkness. But we failed as Jack made a fatal error.

"Mining men?" the cadaverous one had asked, slanting his head in inquisitorial directness. And Jack had answered thoughtlessly:

"Well, we're just looking around."

Then he *knew* we were mining men. We were secretive. Persons who are on the trail of a bonanza are always supposed to hide their objective.

"Brothers!" he announced, as he looked about him and lowered his voice, as though there were spies behind every twisted timber-line pine, and ears on every jumbled stone of this desolate, drift-ridden land, "Brothers, I've got just what you're lookin' fer. If it's a straight, fine bang-up proposition, I've got it. Now, if you'll jest wait 'till I can dig into this here pack an' git out a sample that I run across yesterday —"

"But we've got to be off this trail by dark," we pleaded. He held up an ancient hand.

"You wouldn't pass up a chance at a million, would

you? ” he asked. “ Brother, right there in that pack, I’ve got float that ought to run a good five thousand ounces to the ton. Yes sirree! Right there, in that pack. You’d say so yourself if you seen it. Why — ”

Someway, we broke away — just in time to be able to follow a trail by dismounting and leading our horses. But even as we faded into the night, his voice followed us, mingled with the clanking of that heavy bell:

“ Well, now, if you don’t want it yourself, maybe you’d know somebody. Somebody that ’d be int’rested in a real, bang-up proposition — ”

The next day, on the return trip, we saw him again, and watched unseen, as with his wabbling burro and its giant bell, he slowly made his way along the edge of a rock slide, at last to halt, drop the lead rope, bend suddenly, pick up something, then hold it to the light, digging feverishly at it the while with his hunting knife. This was followed by a long consultation, accompanied by the waving of hands. Jack and I knew that he was talking it all over with himself. The decision was in the negative; at least he threw his find away and with his belled burro went slowly onward. Jack laughed.

“ There went another million! ” he said. “ But then,” as he neck-reined his horse to the trail again, “ it doesn’t make much difference. There’s always another bonanza waiting for those fellows just around the next bend of the gulch.”

This thought caused Jack and myself to take a bit of a census not so long ago. During our trip we had met several score men, all past sixty; some living in otherwise deserted towns, some merely sleeping where the night found them, others in huts — we even found one using as a sleeping spot a hollowed-out shelter in the

deserted beaver hut of a dried-out dam — and a few occupying regal quarters in real log cabins with roofs that did not leak, all of them paupers — and all of them millionaires! The only men I've ever seen who could be starving, and yet be rich; who could be without a cent in their pockets and yet refuse a fortune because it wasn't enough!

They are the rearguard of an army, these men. An army of searchers and hopefuls which once flooded over the Rockies: the prospectors who opened a country to civilization, and who liked the idea so much that they're still at it. Not that they grew rich by their efforts, because they didn't, that is, in actual money. But then, the high country has a strange effect upon one who lives in it alone and continuously. There comes a time when real money doesn't count. Especially with prospectors.

Just as an example, the happiest man whom I ever knew was an old prospector who lived up Spring Gulch, near the mountain town in which I make my home. His house was little better than a hut. He hadn't seen a city in forty years. He wore his hair in a braid, tied nattily with a bit of red flannel. And in the muss and tumble of that hut he had more evidences of riches than any one since the days of Croesus.

There would be, for instance, a bit of float that he'd picked up over by the Lamartine, which, if there were only a few thousands of capital to uncover it, would reveal a silver mine worth at least ten millions. Then there was that brown rock over there which was simply full of gold. To say nothing of a hundred other samples which he had uncovered here and there about the hills.

There was only one trouble. His actual living came from ten dollars a month which he received from the

county. When he went into town with his ancient, green-faded Prince Albert coat and patched trousers, he would enter the first café he saw, order everything upon the bill of fare and then, with great gusto, pay his bill by the simple expedient of leaving a nickel on the table. All of which was forgiven. Because, you see, the name by which every one knew him was Crazy Bill.

He was crazy for gold. For the thrill of it, rather than the possession of it; for the uncovering of it, the discovery of it. Crazy, in fact, where once there had been the craze of an obsession, of following the will-o'-the-wisp. And that craze created an army that is lessening now in its ranks, with only a veteran here and there to bear onward the standards. An army that will not come again.

Prospecting, like everything else, has changed since the days when the first searchers with their picks and their pans and their burros started forth with the thrill of a potential bonanza in every waiting mountain. In the first place, it has been pretty well established that simply because a rise in the earth's surface is called a mountain, it does not necessarily follow that a precious metal is to be found concealed somewhere about its breast. In fact, mountains are a great deal like the rest of the surface of the earth. Some of them are good for one thing, and some are good for something else, and a good many are good for nothing at all except ptarmigan, which live in the vicinity of their snow patches, and the mountain sheep which inhabit their rock slides. Therefore the prospector of to-day, understanding all those things, and being of a different breed, doesn't waste much time in going over the entire upraised surface of the United States. He has a pretty good idea, gained from scientific knowledge, of

where he will hit metal, and he goes there and looks over the ground, finding it or not finding it as the case might be.

The prospector of the present generation isn't a prospector at all. He is usually a scientifically trained person, educated in college, full of technical knowledge and not too much romance, who rarely goes out on his own hook, traveling instead at the behest of some mining company by whom he is employed to look over a certain district and make a report on it. Or he is a resident of a mining community, following up a theory regarding the continuation of some well-worked vein, in the hope of striking it at a point that is not covered by claims. Or a mining engineer who has noticed a certain topography and figured in his own mind that because of the various "dykes" and formations which exist, there should be mineral. But all those matter-of-fact things did not pertain in the old days, with the result that every mineral-bearing locality was filled with men whose claim to fame existed in the fact that they might be poor to-day and rich to-morrow; children of fortune whose assertions could not be denied for the simple reason that to do so would necessitate the gift of prophecy. The remainder of that army still wanders the hills, old now, gray now, stooped and bent now. But the lure, the passion, is still as fierce as ever.

One night at sunset, my pack outfit dipped over a hill of sage and down into the remains of what was once a teeming town. A big mine had been there, and a smelter and a mill — but desertion has done its work. Where had stood the usual dance halls and the usual saloons, and the usual by-products of mining, which seemed to run greatly to drinking and gambling and women, judging from the customary remains of a defunct mining camp, now were only so many buildings in various stages of

decay, the mud roofs of the log cabins broken away in yawning patches, windows gaping, doors standing open. House hunters of the day, we rode the various lines of cabins and selected our abode for the night. Then, as the pack horses one by one gave up their burdens and moved forth to the grassy streets to roll, we halted for a moment in our labors, to observe that we were not alone.

An old man was approaching from far at the other end of the squalid, deserted village. A gaunt man, a bent man, leaning upon a lengthy home-made staff of aspen; a man who moved slowly, laboriously, and when he approached within hailing distance displayed himself as ghastly pale except for his lips, and these were blue, as though he had used theatrical grease paint on them. He grunted and sighed as he walked, his watery eyes peering at us as though they saw only through a film. At last he sank on an adjacent doorstep.

"I'm Old Man Brown," he announced. "Been prospeckin' a little around here. Goin' to camp here tonight? "

We nodded to our dismantled equipment in obvious answer. A thin, shaking hand rose to the blue lips and rubbed them in quivering fashion.

"Mighty glad o' that," he said. "You wouldn't mind me grubbin' with you? A feller said he'd bring me some grub a week or so ago, but he never done it. Last Thursday I got pretty hungry, so I dug some worms an' walked four miles over to Beaver Creek an' stayed all night there. Caught eleven fish. Been livin' on 'em ever since — " the lean hand shook at the blue lips again — "but they're all gone now."

"Poor devil! " I muttered, as I helped Charlie lift the last pannier from the back of his beloved Big Major. But Charlie only grunted.

“Wait ’till he gets th’ wrinkles out of his belly!” he prophesied.

An hour later, a different Mr. Brown pushed back his chair from the commandeered table of a commandeered, deserted log cabin, and with the air of a connoisseur raised a gift cigar between two very stiff fingers. He lighted it and puffed slowly, as though testing the grade of the tobacco. He blew a billow of smoke toward the newspaper-decorated ceiling, then turned upon us his weak blue eyes.

“Tell you right now,” he said, “’twouldn’t take much to bring this country back around here. No sirree. ’Course, it’s shet down now, but then, that wouldn’t mean nothin’. Why, do you know, I’ve seen th’ time when these hills around here was just black with prospectors, grubbin’ in the sage for surface indications. Good ore too — if they’d only known where to look for it.” He waved a hand to indicate the whole sagebrushed, mesa land, lying gray and glowering about us in the blackness of an approaching storm, the black outlines of a fire-gutted mill upon the hill, the slanting building which housed the disused smelter. “An’ everything’ll come right back too, the minute there’s the slightest start. There’s a couple of School of Mines boys goin’ to retimber that old shaft up there, and if they do, just you watch this district!”

I looked out the grimy window, at the slatternly cabins, the careening buildings, the ancient dance halls and saloons.

“Suppose it does come back?” I asked. “What of it?”

“What of it?” The eminent Mr. Brown pounded his staff upon the ancient floor. “Why, this here was one of the best little towns of its size in Colorado. We had dance halls here an’ everything. An’ this districk was one of th’ best too, an’ don’t you let anybody fool you. I’ve got a

dozen or more claims staked out around here an' there ain't one of 'em, if it was worked right, that wouldn't make a man independent rich! "

Shortly afterward, he left us flat, stumbling along with the aid of his staff, and mumbling to himself through those theatrical blue lips. Charlie winked a knowing eye.

"Didn't I tell you? " he asked. "Iron th' wrinkles out o' their bellies an' they all sing different. Wouldn't sell you none of them claims either, for less 'n a million. Don't I know? "

Again I looked out the window, at a decrepit little wreck of a town, huddled now, it seemed, in its attempt to escape the fury of slashing wind and driving rain; a miserable, piteous excuse for a town, where men at best could only exist until they gained the money to hurry elsewhere, a town without home possibilities, without comforts, without anything save the rudest of frontier equipment.

"But why anybody should be thrilled at the idea of bringing a place like this to life — "

Charlie grunted — he who had been reared in the companionship of such men as Old Man Brown, and had lived in a log cabin town himself.

"Say, it ain't the town," he announced. "He don't even know it's here. Most of 'em — " then Charlie made a motion toward his forehead — "most of 'em's touched a bit. From bein' alone so much an' in the high country. An' from lookin' for gold so long that by now it's stickin' out of every rock. An' from holdin' on to it."

Jack, busy with the dishes, looked up.

"Funny about 'em that way, isn't it," he asked. "Crazy to get somebody to take hold of their property — until somebody really wants it."

"Then nobody can have it," announced Charlie. "Say, there was the Dutchman, over by Lake Pass. You know, that last cabin we passed before we hit the willows? Where that mine dump was? Well, that was the Dutchman's. Used to pretty near starve to death there, grubbin' around in his tunnel and gettin' something to eat when he could — an' not eatin' half the time. Then along comes a man from Denver an' stays all night with him, and looked at his ore an' got all fed up on how rich the mine was an' everything. An' just as a favor to the Dutchman, he said he'd take some of the stuff down to Denver an' see if he couldn't get somebody interested in it. Well, he did — just as a favor, understand. He wasn't gettin' anything out of it himself — but he just felt sorry for the old man. So, finally, they made a deal where these people paid the old man five thousand dollars and were going to pay him the rest of fifty thousand dollars in installments.

"Fifty thousand dollars!" repeated Charlie, drawing out the amount as though he liked the taste of it. "An' here he was, 'way over sixty years old; it'd been enough to keep him like a millionaire for the rest of his days. But you know what? The Leadville papers run a story about it all, sayin' what a fine mine it was an' all that. An' the old man seen it. 'Humph!' he says. 'If it's worth that to them, it's worth it to me!' So he give 'em back the money an' wouldn't have anything more to do with 'em, an' a couple o' months later, somebody came along by the cabin an' found him sittin' there on the mine dump — dead. A rock or somethin' 'd fallen on him while he was countin' up his millions!"

Nor was Charlie's illustration of the old-time prospector and miner an unusual one. I've met a great many

of the old fellows in the years I have been wandering the high country of the Rockies, stuck away in cabins at timber line, roaming the hills, living on the bounty of the community. I've never met one who wasn't feverish for a partner, or for somebody to "take a-hold of the property." And I've never met one who, at the final drawing up of the papers, wouldn't become as skittish as a mule deer and think better about going through with the deal!

Because, after all, it isn't the money. There are times when I believe it never was the money. It was the thrill of discovery; the romance of being a prospector, the obedience to the wandering instinct, and gold was merely a wonderful excuse. As far as making a stake for life was concerned, that was largely on the surface. The history of mining communities shows few instances of prospectors who ever quit, once they had located pay ore. Off again — just as soon as they could sell their claim — off again to new country; over the hill and away to where the mountains beckoned and the will-o'-the-wisp lured them on anew. That was the zest. That the thing which carried them on — the gold which meant adventure; and of all western characters, the prospector is the only one who cannot be overdrawn. His past is fiction, his life is fiction, and his present is fiction — and he a fiction character living it!

We wandered one day through a natural inferno of the Lake City country in southern Colorado, where all the world had slipped. The greasy soil had moved, as though a giant had pushed it while still in the plastic state. The trees slanted eerily. Giant boulders hung in place as though held there by a thread. The vegetation was askew; far in the distance, ragged, black peaks fringed the sky

in a sort of panoramic cut-out as they ran viciously to a sudden halt at what is known as Cannibal Plateau, where a gentleman of the past, named Packer, was wont to guide gold-seeking parties, and then, according to the charges which later sent him to prison, considerately kill them and cut them up for future consumption. Near by, in a little enclosure of time-blackened palings, were the graves of three such victims. Eerie country, weird country, as though it should be quite natural for cannibals to live there, and cannibal victims to be buried by the roadside.

They called it Slumgullion Gulch, so named back in the days when there was the same directness in designations that there was in building roads. When a place was reached by the nearest route, usually that of the gulch, heading straight upward from valley to ridge, no matter what the grade might be or how often the creek might go upon a rampage and take the highway with it. To-day they build roads in the mountains upon a different system, preferring to wind about the sidehills where the granite forms a firm foundation, and where, though the route may be longer, the way is safer and less precipitous. In the same fashion have names changed; there is more finesse -- a thing not known when life ran in the raw -- with the result that a stream which possessed underfed fish became Skinnyfish Creek, a certain ranch in Middle Park, for obvious reasons, went on the maps as Crazy Woman Ranch, a mountain that now might be named something euphonious, like Puma Peak, was then -- and so remained -- just plain Sleepy Cat. They named them Indian fashion in the old days, according to the outstanding features: Slaughterhouse Gulch was where stood the local butchering pens, Sheep Gulch, Dirty Woman Ranch, Soap Creek, Mud Creek, Scraggly Peak, Bloody Nose

Mountain, Sixshooter Brown's, Three Mile Creek, Frying Pan — there was a delightful naïvete about it all which reached its dramatic climax in the christening of Slumgullion Gulch.

Hardly a place of beauty, in name or in scenery. Hardly a spot in which one would desire to smooth away the fading days of a lifetime. Yet in the midst of it we heard a tumult; wild shoutings and screamings, mixed with the incessant blatting of sheep, as an old prospector, with arms waving, rescued his one companion, a jack burro, from a playful excursion with his fellow jacks of a passing sheep outfit.

"They'd steal th' clothes off your back!" he shouted, as he dragged the long-eared truant back to the vicinity of a hole in the ground, above which stood an ancient windlass. Then with sudden suspicion, "You ain't sheep men?"

We assured him, and he gazed up at us with his one remaining eye — the other had departed years before in a premature mine blast.

"Good thing you ain't. Every time a sheep outfit passes, this here jack wants to go with 'em. Wouldn't have nothin' to take my ore down with if he went."

Jack leaned forward in his saddle.

"Shipping ore, eh?" he asked. "High grade, I guess."

The miner demurred.

"Nope — ain't shippin' it. But I've got it. Got the best ore in this country. I'll ship it when I get good and ready."

Jack grinned.

"Wouldn't like to sell a quarter interest, would you?"

The one eye narrowed. The man moved closer to his ancient windlass, as if to protect it.

"No!" he shouted. "I ain't in the market. I know what I've got!"

Later on, when a long trip was over, we took a bit of that ore — he had given it to us before the dread suspicion had gone through his mind that we might be there to take his beloved bonanza away from him — down to the assay office and had it tested. The assayer smiled as he handed us the sheet. It showed a total value of \$2.91 to the ton.

So it isn't the money. It's the dream of it — and the thrill of pursuit. Like hunting, and coming home satisfied with the indications of game, thus giving an excuse to go again.

The old-time prospector was constantly on the move. As a rule, he did not find a mine and settle down to make a fortune. He sold it, and went somewhere else, to find another one. Like picking flowers, or hunting pretty pebbles along a seashore — the zest was always for the next one.

He was not a trained man. What he had learned was from experience, or from some one else no more gifted than himself. The corner store was his bank; a frying pan, a bedding roll, sowbelly and beans for grub, his rifle, his pick and gold pan, and sometimes a mortar and pestle formed his outfit — including, of course, the pack jack which lugged it. His journey was a directionless thing; he moved where the day took him, or spent whole weeks in one vicinity, roaming aimlessly, yet ever searching.

A stream, and he would halt, to dig to bed rock — for by the system of gravity, gold-bearing sands lie at the deepest possible point — then fill his pan and rock it carefully in a manner that would gradually eliminate all the

lighter rocks and sands and finally clear it of everything except a tiny amount of silt clinging at the edge. Then the scrutiny for nuggets or for "colors" — infinitesimal flakes of gold that would indicate a metal-bearing strata somewhere within the range of the stream.

Or he would search the gulleys, picking up every unusual piece of stone, to heft it carefully in the hope of finding it of metal-bearing weight, to study it, and perhaps crush it that he might determine, also by the panning process, if it contained gold, or tuck it away in his pack for future assaying. Then, at the slightest indication, the slow, toiling process of following up this "float", or dislodged piece of metal-bearing rock, until, far away, in the higher reaches of the hills, he might come upon the outcropping of the vein, and stake out another claim.

Not that all claims were valuable. Many of them were not. It is a comparatively easy matter to find metal-bearing rock in metal mountains. The job, however, is to find one that carries enough silver and gold to pay for the trouble of mining it.

This condition, however, did not apply as much in the old days as it does now. In the first place, mining was cheaper. In the second, gold was gold and silver was silver in those days, and there were plenty of persons who were willing to pay, either for claims, or for the expenses of "grubstaking", that a prospector might go upon his aimless, will-o'-the-wisp way. Usually it was the grocery store — with results that have lasted even to the present day.

Some years ago, a friend of mine went to live in a mining camp. One of the things that impressed him about a certain grocery store was the wide divergence of its

prices from that of the other stores in the city. There came the time when natural curiosity caused him to ask questions. The storekeeper, a man of other days in mining, looked at him in amazement.

"Why shouldn't I charge a little more?" he asked. "See those books there? They've got sixty thousand dollars on 'em — money that's been advanced by this store to prospectors and leasers to go out and try to find gold mines and build up this country. Well, they didn't pan out. But that wasn't our fault, was it? It was all being done for the community, and so why shouldn't the community pay for it?"

Which was a rather broad way of looking at things, for the simple reason that the usual storekeeper was not ordinarily thinking of the community. Instead, he was thinking of himself and of what the advance might mean in the future. There are millionaires in the mining history of Colorado. Some of the most famous were grocers who advanced the grub necessary to send a prospector upon his way, losing everything if the prospector failed to find gold, and gaining a half of the claim if his journey was a fortunate one. And the grubstakers usually worked the mine. The prospector almost invariably sold out — and went onward.

"You see," said Charlie one night, as we talked it all over, "they sort o' got in a rut. First place, it was an awful easy life — nothin' to worry about as long as their grub an' their pack jack held out, an' always somebody else waitin' at the end of the trip to believe their stories about a new bonanza over on th' other side o' th' hill, an' send 'em out after it. If they did strike it, they could sell out easy, an' get a good stake, an' have a big time 'till they'd blowed it all. Then they could go out again. An'

they kept on doin' it, until one day they woke up an' found out they was too old to do anything else. By that time, they'd gotten just a little bit off from bein' alone so much an' all that — an' so they just stay at it, an' after 'while somebody comes along an' finds 'em, dead in their cabin. An' that's th' end of another prospector.

"Why, there was an old fellow lived over by my home, over above Twin Lakes. 'Way up there where you seen them drifts when we went by. That little cabin. Had a hole in th' ground up there that he couldn't any more work than he could fly to Jerusalem. Too old, you know. But do you think he'd leave it? No, sir, somebody might come along there an' steal it away from him. So he stayed, winter an' summer, an' the folks down in town used to kind o' keep watch on him by his light, to see that he was all right. Well, there came a spell of bad weather, blizzards an' such, an' folks went to bed pretty early, an' nobody noticed much whether the light was on or not. Then somebody remembered that they hadn't seen it, so they sent me 'n another fellow up there to find out how he was.

"He had a habit of markin' off the days on the calendar, with a lead pencil — so's, I guess, he could figure how long it 'd be 'till summer came again an' he could fool around in that hole in the ground. Well, the door was unlocked when we went up there, an' so we walked right in when nobody answered our knockin'. There he was, sittin' in his chair, with a piece of ore layin' on the floor where it'd dropped out of his hand, an' his fingers stretched out, just like it'd happened the minute we walked in the cabin. But there hadn't been any mark on the calendar for thirteen days."

Dead in their cabins. It happens now with increasing

frequency; men who were young in the teeming days of the Rocky Mountain gold fever are now in their seventies. And when one is alone at seventy, far from the world, from a doctor — at last a passerby halts, walks to the window of a slatternly cabin, and looks in. Following which he goes into town and notifies the coroner. Then the local paper runs a two-inch notice and another mountain cabin stands deserted, with the grass growing about the log sill, and the pine squirrels chattering along the eaves. It is the usual history.

They seem to have few relatives, these queer men of the hills. Perhaps they have gone long before, or perhaps a life of wandering has caused a natural drifting apart. Sometimes the mourner is a companion prospector, awaiting a like fate. Sometimes there is no one at all. And yet, it has been the end of a perfect life; there's no one happier than a prospector.

A life incidentally as precarious as it has been joyful. A satisfied life, whether it be by the task of dragging a few tons of ore a year from a hole in the ground, getting it down to the sampler by hook and crook and then with the proceeds making the rounds of the town's mercantile establishments and settling up the comparatively puny bills — there are still a dozen or so accounts of this type in every old-time mining camp; or whether it be upon the slim remainder of a stake gained at some far time in the past, and now employed that a lone man may remain when others have gone, still waiting, still hoping, in some decrepit, defunct mining camp; or whether upon a pittance allowed by the county, the results seem the same. There's always the happiness, the satisfaction, the interest. Especially if the object of that interest be a town where the roofs are caving, and the windows are agape.

For then there's no one to bother, no one to interfere with dreams and visions and the running of a city as she should be run!

We found such a municipal manager one day, high upon Fremont Pass, in a town where once there had been six thousand persons. There'd been eight dance halls there too, he told us. And more than that many saloons. Strange, but they can always remember the number of dance halls, and the number of places where one could drink, and where any one with a new stake in his pocket could have it thoroughly and hilariously taken away from him so that, penniless, blinking away his headache, he might start forth anew upon the trail of an undiscovered bonanza. Down in the southern part of Colorado is the town of Gunnison, once the center of a scattered mining community, but now a city of tourists, of cattle, of fishing activities and of a normal school. A pretty little town, quiet, well-behaved.

"But it ain't nothin' to what it used to be," an aged old prospector told me. "Why, at one time in this town, countin' dance halls, gamblin' palaces an' everything, there were eighty-three places where a man could get a drink! And the girls! You ought 've saw 'em! "

For girls, it seemed, of a type who wore tinsel on their dresses and wore those dresses short, played more than a mere thinking part in the ancient romance of gold. In many a district they were the only bits of femininity which existed. And soiled though they might be, they were Women. To be sought, to be loved, and then, when the gray dawn had come, to be remembered as some prospector wandered forth into the stillness of the hills again that he might name his stake the "Molly B", and thrill romantic thrills with the name, while back in the slatternly

camp and the slab-boarded dance hall which formed her habitation, Miss Molly B deftly wiped the bottom of her beer glass on the edge of the table and set her smile for the next denizen of the wild who might come roaming in with gold dust oozing from his wallet. And as if in memory — since the dance halls are gone and the Molly B's have long departed — paint and pine still hold true to their trust, and afar off upon some gullied road that long since ceased to be, one still finds a board careening above the yawning hole of a caved-in tunnel opening, and upon that board, the scrawled letters:

“SWEET baBY MiNe.”

Therefore, with this in mind, it was not unexpected that we should hear of the dance halls and the places where one could get a drink. But what was rather surprising was the advent of a stack of letters from the Forest Service and the announcement that of all the branches of the government, that particular one was the cussedest one of all. An announcement which naturally caused curiosity — and brought an explanation, by which it was learned that this majestic town, with its careening, deserted buildings, with its church long paintless and longer unoccupied, with its grass-grown graveyard keeping guard above the wreck of the glory that once was Robinson, had been defiled! A plain, ordinary mule had walked into the center of the town, taken one look at his surroundings — and died!

Whereupon the entire population — and he told us the story himself — had taken up the matter with the Forest Service. Was this right that a town should have a mule drop dead in it? Was it right that a town that had known the glories of the past must submit to the fact that the

magpies were roosting on the telegraph poles and that a mule, a common ordinary mule, should continue to be deader and deader? To which the Forest Service replied that it had received the communication of the 12th instant relative to the dropping dead of a mule in the deserted town of Robinson, and that if the present population of Robinson would look after the removal and proper interment of said mule and determine the owner of said mule, that the Forest Service would endeavor to refund to the population of Robinson the cost of moving said mule. That was all. No sentiment. No thought of the moral effects of a mule dropping dead. More, when the population had removed said mule and determined the former owner of said mule to be Mike Casanovia of Leadville, the Forest Service had replied, thanking the population for its letter of the 8th instant, in reference to File FH 103,342, pertaining to the dropping dead of a mule in the deserted town of Robinson, and stating that the Forest Service had investigated the matter in regard to the possible ownership being that of Mike Casanovia and regretted to state that said Mike Casanovia had denied any knowledge and connection with said mule, and would the population of Robinson kindly state upon what predication the ownership of said mule was established.

“ And it ain’t the three dollars that it cost me to move him! ” mourned the entire population of Robinson, as he waived the reading of the dozen or so letters pertaining to the demise of the unwanted animal. “ It’s that a mule could come in here and drop dead anyhow. Why, I’ve seen the time when these streets were so crowded that a mule couldn’t get on ’em. What’s more,” he added, *sotto voce*, “ it’s liable to come again. There was a bunch of

New York capitalists up this way last week, looking at that mine. If they 'd ever open it up, this town 'd come right back! ”

Toward that end, they live on, regardless of that which may intervene. One night at dusk, high atop the Rabbit Ear Range, there came into our camp a shadowy figure, trailed by a gray mare and a colt. He had a frying pan, a fishing rod, and a bedding roll — but that was all. He wasn't hungry, he said, but he guessed he could eat a little. And that we might not notice that he waded through our stack of food like some devastating scourge, he told us of his manganese claim over on the other side of the range, and the five stakes he'd made and let slip through his fingers, and of the one that he was just about to lay hands on, adding thereto marvellous and thoroughly bore-some stories of the Indian massacre at Meeker Station in Western Colorado — at which he was not present. When the food was gone, and we were recovering from our astonishment at his capacity, he rose, grasped his halter rope, then paused.

“Boys,” he said, “it's just this here way. Either I find that gold mine or I don't. Now, a man can't live without grub, can he? Well, I ain't got no grub. And I ain't got no money. But I've got a gold nugget here — ” whereupon a hand dived toward his hip pocket, and halted there without displaying the gem — “an' if you'll just let me have a little bacon, I'll either give you this here gold nugget, or I'll leave the money for you down at the Mercantile Company in Steamboat Springs, just's soon — ”

One couldn't take his last gold nugget! He got the bacon. A week later, far on the other side of the range, we told two ranch boys of the occurrence and how we

might be the potential finders of a gold mine. But a snort interrupted.

"He's got a fishing rod, ain't he? "

"Yes. He says he catches some of his food — "

"Got red wrappings, ain't it? "

"Yes."

Again a snort.

"Needn't tell me his name. I know him. Got that rod from me two years ago over at Luna Lake and said he'd give me a dollar for it, but that he didn't have the change then, nothin' but a gold nugget. But just as soon's he got into Steamboat, he'd leave the money for me at the Mercantile Company. And they never even heard of him! Don't do anything but travel from one lake to another along the top of the range, knowing he's pretty sure to find somebody there. I've met a dozen fellows he's worked that gold nugget racket on. But nobody's ever seen it! "

To which, one in the ordinary course of life might reply that here was a different sort of tramp — not taking the more accustomed route of the back doors of the city, nor braving the dogs of the farmyard, but knowing full well that the arms of generosity open far wider when one is away from civilization. But a tramp is only a tramp, with no object ahead save the food of the day and the shelter of the night. Here was an incentive, something beckoning, something calling — a gold mine just ahead!

A gold mine ahead — and whether it ever materializes or not seems to make but little difference. Suffice that it be waiting, somewhere in a far-away gulch, or on the other side of the range, or beyond the rainbow. Far south, along the course of one of the innumerable Beaver creeks which stream endlessly through the Uncompahgre

National Forest, we turned in our saddles one day to watch the uncertain course of a bearded, decrepit man as, slow hand over slow hand, he worked his way along a rickety fence toward the doorway of a more rickety cabin. We knew his story without asking it; beside the door stood a pick and a gold pan, long crusted with rust. We knew by his uncertain progress that he was blind, and by a store of provisions just visible within the door that the county had just made the contribution which would allow him to live another month.

"Ain't that awful now," asked Charlie, as he took up the slack on Big Major's halter rope.

"Poor devil!" I replied.

But then came an interruption from our rear, where an aged man was working his way in the darkness along a careening fence. A voice still vibrant, coming from a chest to which a life in the open had given strength and depth and resonance, was raised in joyful tune — a song of other days:

"Oh, Buffalo Gals, won't you come out to-night?

Come out to-night? Come out to-night?

Buffalo Gals, won't you come out to-night

An' dance in the light of the mo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-n?"

Ahead of me, Jack Nankervis shifted in his saddle.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the use?" he asked.

## CHAPTER X

### FISHIN' FOR FISH

I CAME home one day last autumn from a little excursion to a near-by creek with a nice mess of trout. Not an unusual occurrence, except for one thing. The stream from which I caught those trout — didn't have any trout in it! Which, of course, sounds paradoxical. But it isn't.

In the tourists' portion of the Colorado Rockies there's a general exodus on the first of September. All day long and all night, for that matter, the cars go whirling through in a ceaseless stream, heading out of the North Park and Middle Park countries, over Berthoud Pass and down into Denver for the general distribution homeward. Camps that have existed for weeks are broken. The hills become hills once more, the Forest Service camp sites are again nothing but pretty breaks in the forests, with only their blackened stone fireplaces and their newspapers and tin cans to remind one of the camping parties which once thronged there; the mountains have returned to their serenity — and as a result, the fish have returned to their holes. Which explains why fish can be caught in places where they have not existed all summer.

For the trout — even though he is a poor fish, with a short memory, and with a penchant for getting caught and then displaying three or four hair-lip marks on his jaw where he's been hooked before without having been taught a lesson — can have his moments. At least he loves

peace and seclusion, and doesn't thrive on constant visits from fishermen, children wading in his favorite roosting place, mamma throwing the paper boxes and rubbish into his favorite back swirl and papa shooting at a tin can set upon a rock in the middle of his riffle. This usually happens around a motor camp, with the result that there is a general fish migration, without a return until the campers themselves have migrated. Then the trout comes back, and the mountaineer, knowing the fact, sneaks along in the shadows, gently drops a fly over a promising swirl — and gets what he's after.

One hears a good deal these days from native mountaineers about the unwelcome camper. But after all, that mountaineer doesn't lead such a tough existence as far as the enjoyment of his native habitat is concerned. True that during July and August his fishing holes are barred to him for the simple reason that the fish have been run away by a conglomeration of everything from wading parties to childish attempts to dam the stream. True too that the road which he and his fellow mountaineers have built by their own efforts to some remote place in the mountains becomes a highway for cars which bear seemingly every license-plate in the world except that of his own vicinity. True also that the trout have disappeared from the open and unposted stretches of stream, but with the coming of September the mountains are his own again and the world revolves upon a different and a better axis. After all, summer is not the time to see the mountains — yet that is the time which the tourist spends there. It is in the autumn that hills are hills, colors are colors and the world is good.

For then it is that the rainbow strikes with a fierceness that he has not known in the summer months, and the

native trout go gobbling along at the surface of the water, scooping in the various flies that have been stunned by the frost — and very amenable indeed to an artificial lure which resembles, at least, the real article. Of course, the Eastern Brook aren't biting well, owing to the fact that their spawning season is approaching, — but fish are fish to the mountaineer, as long as there's one turning handsprings at the end of his line.

Then it is that one's eyes become keener as one follows the trail through the quakers; the deer and elk are coming down from the higher hills, driven to lower altitude by the snows which already have begun to make their mark at timber line. The bear is in the brambles, taking a final *chassé* about the country before cold weather drives him to hibernation. The chipmunks furnish a constant amusement with their last-minute scramble at the storing of food; a fringe of ice shows itself at the edges of the streams with the rising of the sun — and all the world is colors.

Colors which the tourist does not see, because they are things which develop after he has hurried away to get back to the job or to assure himself that the children are properly ensconced in school at the beginning of the term. The pure white of the snowy range, instead of the dusty, dirty splotches of eternal snow which have lain in the saddles and along the ragged flutings all summer. The different color of the sky, which, with cooler weather, takes on an almost indescribable blue — deeper, more ultramarine. The red splotches of the rose pods, thick on every bush beside the road and trail. The pines become black when viewed from the distance, the spruce trees show more silver at their tips, while in the groves of quaking asp, one moves along a world of molten gold as

the sun streams through leaves once green, but now a mass of fluttering yellow except where the red splotches only serve to emphasize the general coloration all about and deepen the whole effect.

Then it is, with the mountain world changed, with the mountain world silent once more, except for the gradually increasing wind which whines down from the high country with its hint of blizzards to come, that the hillbilly steps forth to portions of trout streams that he has thoroughly and willfully neglected all summer. There's a reason. He knows that the trout, disturbed for months, will be back in their holes by now in search of food which has grown there during their absence and that a mess of rainbows or natives should not be a very difficult task. And it isn't — in places which have been gaining the reputation of having been either fishless or fished out.

Not that fishing is what it once was in the six thousand miles or more of streams which form the waterways of the Colorado Rockies. It isn't. In the first place, there aren't six thousand miles which can be fished. Within the last ten or fifteen years there's been a great deal of activity in fencing lands which weren't deemed worth enclosing before, and as much activity in painting signs which proclaim to the world that a man with a rod and a book of flies is no longer welcome. Then too, where one lone fisherman wielded his rod ten years ago, there are now hundreds. Out of which, perhaps, one in twenty is a trout fisherman while the other nineteen are merely persons who frighten the liver and lights out of the things they're trying to catch, thus making the game a bit tougher all the way 'round. And when it comes to trout and trout fishing, the rules on bullheads, carp, sunfish, gars, channel cats, buffalo and hickory shad don't

seem to apply. In the showman vernacular, the fellow who catches trout must know his groceries. Not only in the catching, but where to do it.

Not so long ago, Rollin Parvin was making a trip of inspection through Colorado. "Rolly" is the state game and fish commissioner: one of those persons who can find personalities in fish, and evidences that they even possess brains. With which is combined an ardent desire to restore fishing to what it was "back in the old days." In his travels, he stopped for a moment to watch a group of men busily lashing a stream over in the Middle Park district, and saying things under their breath as they did so. "Rolly" drove innocently closer.

"Catching anything?" he asked.

"Not a catch," was the reply. "No fish in this creek."

The fish and game commissioner scratched his chin.

"Now, that's queer. We've been putting a hundred thousand fish a year into this stream. Funny they're not here. Trout fishermen, are you?"

There came a confession that they knew more about bullheads than rainbow, having come from Missouri where the bullhead blooms. Parvin got out of his machine and walked to the stream.

"This water right here doesn't seem to have much foliage around it, does it?" he asked. "No trees, or bushes along the sides or anything of that kind. No hay on the ground to produce grasshoppers or mosquitos. Notice that? Well, now, let's look at something else." He reached into the water and turned over a stone, scoured clean on every side. "If you were hungry, where would you go, to an empty barn or a restaurant? Same way with a fish, Brother; you'll find him where the food is. Now, if you'll move down this stream about two miles, you'll

find conditions different, and if you don't make a lot of noise or slop around in the water too much, you'll catch a mess of fish."

Which explains, perhaps, why there's usually a rise to the fisherman's fly in the shady nook beneath overhanging trees, or in the swirl of water just below a rapid flow of the stream, or in the riffles where a creek shelves off after slow drifting between high, cut banks leading from a hay field. A thing that a trout fisherman rarely thinks about in the academic sense; he's known it so long that he's forgotten he ever learned it.

But then a trout fisherman is a sort of a queer duck, anyway. All summer long, he'll carry a fly book that, from its tangle of leaders, flies, spinners, pieces of imitation gut, and what not, resembles nothing in the world but what it is — an almost impossible puzzle. All season long, and then when winter comes, he'll straighten all that tangle out. Every fly must lie in place, every gut be moistened and straightened, every division of the book placed just so, with the Royal Coachman in this pocket, and the Yellow-bodied Gray Hackle in that one, and the Black Gnats and Blue Bottles and Special Red Ants all together, because they're lures of a general resemblance, with the light-winged ones separated, and in fact, everything put up just so. He'll test each fly to see if the feathers have become loosened, meanwhile dropping a few on the floor where the dog can nose them and become hooked, thereupon chasing wildly out of the room, tearing up the rugs in his flight and knocking over a few pieces of furniture as he escapes capture, finally to be caught, relieved of his instrument of torture and be poked out into the backyard there to yowl his displeasure until the sorting is finished. On the day of the big spring blizzard,

he'll get out his boots and patch them, and demand wildly to know what on earth has become of that pair of old pants that he's been saving to wear in camp in case his regular ones should get wet. Whereupon the rest of the household informs him that she didn't know they were any good and gave them to the ashman, thus ruining another evening. When the March cold spell comes, with the temperature dropping to zero, he'll come home late to dinner with a stare in his eyes and a set expression to his lips, and after a long time drag from his pocket the cause of it all—an envelope containing two dozen Wickham's Fancy, a dozen Red Ibis, and a general assortment of other flies that run mostly to bright colors and big wings and assorted hooks. Thus necessitating an entire renovation of his fly books which, of course, are packed carefully in mothballs in the bottom of the old trunk in the front room of the basement, under the winter's collection of magazines.

That night the lights burn late, while the Red Ibis is put into a regular position, the Wickham's Fancies go into their proper pocket with the Queen of the Waters and Gold Ribbed Hare's Ears—the man who names trout flies is evidently the same one who christens Pullman cars—the Shoemakers, Grizzly Kings, March Browns, Jungle Coachmen and all the rest of them are gently laid just so and exactly where they should be, and then, on the first day of fly fishing, he hies himself forth, makes a wild stab into his book for a fly that should be in the second pocket but is in the fourth, changes his mind, puts that one back and goes after another, changes his mind once more, takes out an assortment, hooks them at various places in his cap or in his hat band, musses up his book some more, and then, with the disarrangement

of the fly book at last complete — a disarrangement which will continue with increasing entanglements as the season goes on — he settles down to his two favorite flies which he has used continuously for the last ten years. While the remainder of an assortment of trout lures, ranging in number from a few hundred to more than a thousand, and in value to the three-figure mark, continue to hold their enticements unrevealed until the winter rolls around again, and the straightening-out process is resumed while the dog once more gets his nose full of fish hooks and the trout fiend holds each fly, one by one before him, admiring it and boring his wife with dissertations on what a wonderful bait it ought to be. From which it might again be inferred that the trout fisherman is a rare bird. But with it all, he knows his business. He must — to catch trout.

Especially in these days, when trout fishing isn't what it used to be. Not that the fish aren't being put into the streams; the government figures alone show that in the main tourist portion of the Rocky Mountains, more than forty-five million trout have been placed in the streams by the federal fish hatcheries alone, in the last ten years. But for every real trout fisherman of ten years ago, there are now a dozen who have learned the art. And for every dozen who can catch fish, there are a hundred who scare them. Added to which are the roads—and the motor car. And to-day, where the motor car is, the trout isn't.

Last summer, for instance, Jack, Charlie, and myself headed off with our pack outfit into a district where we hadn't intended to go. A beaver dam was the cause of it all, flooding a low space between two gulches and taking for its own a trail which until this time had run clearly

and well defined, but which now, all of a sudden, disappeared in a maze of marshes, stretches of still water, reeds and water grass and more beaver dams. By the time we had finished our circling of sidehills, scrambles through timber, detours around deadfalls and bogs in our efforts to strike the trail once more, we were upon an entirely different one, leading up a fork of the creek opposite that which we had been following and into a country little penetrated, except by cattle and sheep. Late afternoon and we camped—to study out where we were and how to get out of there. While we studied, we fished.

All of a sudden we decided that we weren't so anxious to learn where we were, after all. It was too good to be true. Native trout, far larger than we ever had seen before in such swift water, lunged and plunged and "dogged it", or leaped like rainbows in response to our casting. Charlie even forgot to wear his spurs with their three-inch shanks and two-inch rowels, so great was the anxiety of him to get at the stream—an offense against his beloved boot-adornments which he never would have thought of committing otherwise. It was that bromidic place known as a fisherman's paradise, untrammelled, unspoiled—and spoiled for that simple fact. By noon of the second day I was sitting on a bank, back turned to the water and casting over my shoulder—just to see if they'd be big enough fools to let me catch 'em that way. They were. Fifteen minutes later found me with my rod stretched in the grass, myself on my back and my hat over my face, merely taking the sun. The sound of steps and I moved the hat.

"'Lo, Jack," I said. "Quit fishing?"

"Quit?" he asked. "I quit two hours ago. What's the

use? I tried a spinner on 'em, and that was butchery, so I cut it out. Then I tried flies and that was just as bad. Then I put on flies that were big enough to scare 'em to death and they took those just the same. Finally I broke off the bars and it wasn't much different; they hit so hard it sank the hook, anyway." At last he looked toward camp. "Let's get out of here! "

We got, saying farewell to the sort of a fishing spot that one finds but seldom these days, meanwhile chalking down landmarks that at some future date we might return. Onward along the sidehills, cussing our pack string as one will do, shouting from one to another about the sport we'd had and then halted, suddenly agape, with the knowledge that we hadn't been in fishing territory at all. At least, in comparison to what lay before us. The upward rise of the stream, flattened in innumerable beaver dams, lay to one side of us, and at the edges of those dams, disturbed by the noise of our train and our shouting, were countless ripples as thousands of fish ran for the safety of deeper water, not figurative thousands but literal ones, until the movement of their bodies in the shallows ruffled the surface like the movement of a sudden wind. Fish that were bigger than those we had caught, huskier, heavier, and a hundred fold more numerous. As we rode along, we continued to shout — just so that we might thrill in the watching of those hummocks of water, and almost unbelievable evidences of trout population. More and more fish — then the downward graduation. They were becoming less numerous now, less and less with every beaver dam; finally there came the time when we rode down from the trail and scanned the water without ever an evidence of a trout. Then Jack pointed. Over the brow of the hill we saw the top of a motor car, and when

we reached that brow, a road which stretched through the timber, revealing the smoke of half a dozen camp fires.

"There's your answer," said Jack.

For the man in the motor car is his own worst enemy in these days of energetic trout fishing. In the first place, his influx came in such heavy numbers that almost before any one was aware of the fact, he had depleted the streams to such an extent that trout fishing in the easily accessible places had become almost a bygone possibility and fish hatchery men were sitting up nights in an effort to learn what had happened to their enticements for the summer vacationists. By necessity, systems in vogue for years underwent a change and the stocking of streams took on a new form.

In that connection, there's a little mystery about trout. Back in the states of sluggish water, a stream that deserves catfish will have catfish in it, and so on throughout the list. But out in the Rockies, simply because a stream or lake is good for trout is no sign that trout will be present — unless some one has put them there. Last summer, for instance, I covered some hundred and twenty miles of what is known as the Flat Top region of the White River National Forest. But before I entered the territory, I stopped at a fish hatchery and asked which lakes had trout in them and which didn't. In other words, which had been stocked by the government or the state. In Wyoming there is a stream, the North Platte, that is famous for its rainbow trout. They seem to grow bigger there than in other rivers — and meaner. One of 'em at dusk one night hit my fly in a fashion that made me give thanks all the way back to camp that there hadn't been a connection. For it was late, and the footing was uncertain and I was already standing in water that licked the top

of my boots and then, just when one of my fishing companions called to me from the bank and I turned in the middle of a cast, allowing my wrist to relax and the rod to lie in a foolish position in my hand, that fish hit. When the twist and the instinctive recoil of striking him was over, I had a sprained thumb, one wet leg where I'd gone in over my boot top, and a rapidly swelling eye resultant from the fact that the strike had missed and I, off balance and generally mussed up, had pushed that eye directly in the path of a returning fly, with a hook on it. As to the fish, maybe it was an under-water cow, or a fresh-water whale or something else of the kind. Anyway, they say there are rainbows in the big waters of that river that weigh more than ten pounds. I believe it now. Yet a quarter of a century or so ago conditions were entirely different.

"Tell you how it was," said John Kuykendall, who went to that country in the early eighties, "we had our ranch right near Saratoga on the North Platte, and I was always remarking to another fellow who had a ranch near by that I'd never seen such tremendous suckers anywhere as there were in that river. And thick too. But there wasn't anything else, and one day we got to talking about it more than usual. 'Know what?' he said. 'I believe trout would live in this stream.' 'Then why aren't they here?' I asked him, and he said they weren't there because they'd never been put in.

"Now trout are funny that way. Back in the old days, when I first came out to this western country — it was in 1866 when I was just a boy — there were plenty of trout, it's true. But they weren't everywhere like they are to-day. You'd strike one stream that was just full of them. Then you'd strike another that didn't have any trout in it at

all. As for a lot of the high lakes — forming the headwaters of streams and such, once in a while when the flow was gradual and the trout could get up there, they'd be in it. But if the lake sheered off into heavy falls you wouldn't find a trout. All that's been artificial propagation. As for the North Platte, I don't know what might have been there back in Indian days, but there were only suckers when that ranchman and myself talked it over. Well, the more we talked, the more we wondered. Then we sent for some trout fry, put them in the river and forgot all about it. Five years or so later, I was down at Emigrant's Crossing — where the old California Trail fords the North Platte and where the graves on the hill still give their mute evidence of what times were like in those days — and somebody mentioned the fact that there were trout in the stream. So we went to fishing. And there they were — big fellows; the ones that I'd put in there and forgotten! ”

As it was with the North Platte, so it was with many other streams throughout the Rockies. But that time of first propagation was long ago, with the result that the advent of the automobile found trout almost everywhere that could be reached with a wagon from the state and government fish hatcheries, or even struggling pack horses, with a milk can tied on each side, each milk can alive with finny fry going to a new home. A rather vivid memory of boyhood, in fact, is that of an excursion along a scenic railroad now defunct, and the picture of a man standing on the rear platform of a passenger coach as the train stopped for water, and from there casting into a stream beside the track — and catching a trout! Then came the automobile. Followed by roads, roads — and more roads!

Roads, for instance, that reached into supply bases for fish, such as the beaver dams. And in the mountains it is the prevalence or absence of beavers and beaver dams which spell the presence or absence of fish.

They are the retaining and the breeding ponds of nature. The stream which possesses them in comparative seclusion need cause but little worry regarding its supply of fish.

A queer beast, that beaver. As maligned and lied against in all directions of the compass as any animal that exists. To those who are ultra-enthusiastic, he becomes some sort of a fanciful beast, capable of the most weird activities, and with a brain that is too precocious for an animal. Nor does this imagery come from those who have gained their knowledge from nature-faking books; it often emanates from persons who have lived close to them — and because of their closeness have simply taken things for granted.

“ Funny, ain’t it, how they’ll do? ” asked an old prospector last summer — a prospector with his cabin beside a beaver dam. “ Now, for instance, how they’ll be able to make a tree fall any way they want it to? And then cut it up and suck all the air out of it so they can sink them logs right away? Yessir, beavers sure is inhuman brutes. They’d be fine if they didn’t eat the fish. They sure are destructive that way; you never see beaver where there ain’t no fish.”

Which sounds possible. But there are some faults about it. Just for instance, government observers who are paid to be correct will tell you that a beaver doesn’t fell trees any way he wants them to fall, but that the reason that a beaver-felled tree usually topples toward the water is occasioned by the fact that the tree growing near a creek

or lake usually leans toward that water. As for pulling the air out of logs, it sounds good, but personally I've never met a beaver with a vacuum attachment. In fact, a beaver is a bit overestimated in some particulars. He's an excellent engineer when it comes to damming streams. He knows how to turn water and to put an obstacle across a current that might give even a human occasion for thought. He knows how to build his house so that the water will rise to a certain point within it and no higher, to plaster it in such a way as to form a barricade against weather and a certain protection against coyotes and bobcats who do like a bit of beaver meat when it's in the market. He's friendly, easily tamed, energetic and a bit of a clown; up at a lake in which I'm interested, and which we keep plentifully supplied with beaver, I've always noticed that there is a great deal more of swimming about and slapping of tails when the entire membership is there and the boats are all in use than when there is merely a lone fisherman roaming about the surface of Old Edith. And beaver are usually where there are fish, not because the fish have lured them there, but because the opposite has been true. As for eating them, the contention is silly.

Fish are fools, that's true. Given the right kind of a fisherman and the proper sort of a lure, they'll keep right on biting until the last biter is gone. But they won't hang around something that Nature has taught them to be dangerous. Last summer in the cañon of the Cebolla, I stood upon a log in a beaver dam. It was evening — evening in the high country, with the sun dropping suddenly behind the ragged edge of the Continental Divide, and by its radiation, throwing its colors of sunset into the east instead of the west. Evening with just enough of a cur-

rent flowing past that old log to make it the right and proper spot to appeal to a fisherman, and with an old beaver over against the brush as if sulking; watching my every move as I cast and retrieved, retrieved and cast, like some querulous old man, wondering when in thunder I was going to get out and let him go to work. So just for fun, I changed my direction of casting, throwing my fly directly toward my observer, in fact, striking the water within two feet of him. A surge, a swirl and a native trout would rise — not a small, foolish one, but a big fellow, to be battled to the creel or lost in the struggle of landing him without a net as the case might be, while Old Man Beaver remained stolid, merely waiting until it all was over and he could have his beaver dam again. Not once did it happen, but a score of times; he happened to be at a spot which trout had selected too, and they had merely regarded him as one of the family. A thing which fish don't do when there's a natural enemy about.

As was evidenced the next day in the same place. I cast again where I had caught the trout of an evening before, without result. Then a slow squirming caught my eye. A snake, of the "garter" variety, came out of the water, spread himself upon some dead willows, and sunned himself. Snakes eat fish when they can catch them.

But the beaver won't. Instead, he builds retaining ponds where there is food and where the fish hatcheries send their pack trains — careening along uncertain trails or making their own path through seemingly impenetrable tangles of bog and willows and deadfall — to plant their fish that they may grow. Well, about that time a road goes through, with consignments of motor cars halting in their journey to catch fish by any method at all, and of any size at all, as long as a game warden doesn't come along

to interfere. Then the short sports of the nearest community telephone to the warden's house that they may learn if he is in town; assured that he will not be in their vicinity, they hie themselves forth with nets and sacks — all easily concealed in an automobile, to seine the spawners as they spread forth upon the sand beds for their annual egg laying. For the mountains have their short sports just as well as other communities. That kind of fellow, incidentally, usually likes the ease of a motor car. Another supply base of fishing has its troubles, and the next season there's a lessening of the catches in the waters below.

In fact, to wander back to the troubles of those who would supply a tourist country with fish, the new road and the automobile have caused many adjustments. In the first place they, quite paradoxically, have lessened the fishing areas instead of increasing them. True, they have reached out and opened new districts. But those districts do not remain open long. With the cutting through of the road, there almost inevitably follows some one who sees a valley, likes it, builds a house and has for himself a ranch. And with the first fence, up goes a sign:

NO HUNTING OR FISHING ON THESE  
PREMISES

NO TRESPASSING ALLOWED  
VIOLATION WILL BE PROSECUTED  
THIS MEANS YOU

To the man who has seen other days of fishing and of outings, those signs caused inward ragings. But they do it in the same manner that the various warnings of Forest Service and State Protective associations engender — rage at the persons who make them necessary. True it is, of

course, that there are persons who thrive upon a malappropriation of the rights allowed them under the no-trespassing laws, such as summer hotels which sell rights to fishing for which other persons have been taxed and which those resorts themselves do not really possess, with every tenantry. True, too, that many of these signs are a step beyond legal boundaries, for the simple reason that it isn't the fishing that a rancher can prevent, but the trespassing. Given an airship with the ability for hovering over the ground but not touching it, and one could fish as long as he pleases. But the signs are there just the same, and in increasing abundance; my outfit once moved for two solid days along a stream, three men with the fishing itch breaking out at every portion of their bodies. But nary a scratch could we give to alleviate the suffering. The fences ran in solid lines. While in equally unrelieved array were those signs, one after another, sending forth their monotonous warning. Jack turned wearily in his saddle.

"I can remember the time when you could walk through any of these fences and get a mess of fish," he said sadly. "Without ever a person bothering you. Seems a shame, don't it? But I guess by the time a fellow's had his fences knocked down two or three times, and his meadow trampled to nothing, and his stock turned out from having gates left open, and maybe a cow or two shot by some nut with a twenty-two rifle, he gets a little sore. It wasn't like that in the old days."

Nor were those "old days" so long ago. Fifteen years in fact would cover it; then it was that we would all hie out from Denver with the beginning of the fishing season, moving where the spirit prompted us, and at our destination hire a wagon and a team at the nearest livery barn. "Guess we'll stop at Frenchy's first," we would say, and

when we reached the ranch, there would be Frenchy, standing by the gate, with his wife grinning from the doorway and the children hanging to the palings, while the ranch dogs, excited by visitors, would bark and howl and get into a fight among themselves just to enliven proceedings. The lights would burn late that night in Frenchy's house, while Mrs. Frenchy heard what they were wearing in the city and wished some of those big shows could get out into the country some time, and Frenchy heard the last word from the stockyards and asked innumerable questions regarding the future of the cattle industry and if we thought hay was going to be much higher. Or when the railroad was going to reduce its rates to a point that would pay a fellow to ship on to Omaha if he couldn't get the right kind of a market in Denver. A big day for Frenchy in those times, when the members of a fishing party went through, and he was right glad to see them. But things have changed.

For one thing, Frenchy gets into town more often than he once did. The roads which have brought to his door floods of persons with fishing rods in their hands to make his life miserable as he tries to do his haying and at the same time keep them out of his meadow, have at least brought the city, with its advantages, closer.

Radio aeriels are quite common things on ranches; Frenchy knows any change in the market now the minute it happens, as Mrs. Frenchy knows the styles—if she has time enough in the daily maze of cooking, washing dishes, churning butter, getting the children dressed and off to school, feeding the chickens and perhaps taking a turn on the seat of the bull-rake when hay hands are short, to care about that sort of thing. The old spirit of communion is gone, simply because it has become too commonplace;

instead of a few fellows passing by now and then in a ramshackle surrey, there are now cars from Indiana, from Texas, from Alabama and every State in the Union, accompanied by a generous portion of the old home State, and a request becomes monotonous when it's repeated for the thousandth time.

So, while Frenchy may not have time to wet a line a dozen times in a summer, neither has he time to run a non-paying fishing resort, with the result that his warning goes up beside the others, and another stretch of stream is eliminated. Thus the area is being cut down year after year; it is seldom that one finds a spot now at which he may cast a line other than that of public domain, or a cañon stretch beside a roadway. While the methods of attempting to keep those spots supplied becomes yearly more energetic.

Different methods, incidentally, from the old days of more leisurely attacks upon the trout population. Then a fish hatchery, state or federal, had a comparatively easy task. The hatchery men simply gathered the spawn, put it in the racks, kept the water at a proper temperature, hatched the eggs, allowed the fish to grow until they became about an inch long, and to a point of progression known as the "fry stage", whereupon the hatchery men loaded them in cans, moved them out, dumped them in a creek or lake and called it a day. After which the big fish came along and ate them, the rise of flood waters scoured out their home and battered them to death or starved them by moving away their food supply, the result of it all being that about five per cent. of those fry stood the gaff and grew up to be he-men fish themselves, worthy of eating other fish, or biting at grasshoppers and artificial flies as they moved onward to the frying pan, thus fulfill-

ing their purpose in life. But for the demand, that five per cent. was enough. To-day it isn't, and the proposition of putting fish where they ought to be has become a much more laborious process.

Because the trout — in hard-fished countries at least — doesn't leave the dear old hatchery home any more when he has come to the surface of the water in the hatching trays and ceased to live on that portion of the egg which has clung to him. He waits for bigger and better things. First of all, for instance, with thermometers testing the water to insure a like temperature, he's transferred by careful methods to a retaining pond where his life is what he makes it, and meals are the least of his worries. In fact, there even arrives the time when he comes to know that the sound of a hand pounding on tin means the dinner bell, whereupon he rises to the surface and with a hundred thousand or so of his comrades, moves over to that side of the pond where stands a hatchery man with the noonday meal, consisting of cooked and pulverized liver, or ground oatmeal, or various other ingredients which, when tossed upon the water, represent larruping good truck to a growing young trout. So he eats and eats, not knowing what it's all about, until he reaches a growth of about two inches long, at which time he's deemed worthy to go forth on his own.

A two-inch trout can swim like a streak. More than that, he can fork his own food — I've even seen trout minnows strike with almost incredible swiftness and viciousness at a spinner far larger than they — and above all, he can, as a general rule, keep out of the way of larger fish of his own breed which take right readily to their children as a fattening food. So, when the flood waters are gone, he is transported to his new home, there

to thrive and grow and fatten, and in his childish innocence, care but little for the interruption by fishermen, until he reaches an age where he should be a delectable thing for a frying pan. Then he becomes eccentric, objects to constant visitations, and finally one day moves on out to other portions of a stream where there's not so much noise and confusion, with the result that the unfished portions of the stream become more heavily populated and the heavily fished portions become more fishless. Thus the ball revolves and things for the casual visitor are not so good.

Therefore, the man who knows trout and who follows trout fishing with that staring eye and obsessed manner which only a true trout fisherman can know, does one of three things in these days, and doesn't do several — such as hugging the automobile camps. For even though trout may be there, right in the stream and willing and ready to be caught under the proper conditions, even a fish has his privileges. One of which is to stand for just so much noise, so much wading, so much whipping of a stream and then hie himself to the deepest hole and there sulk until conditions become different. I know, for instance, a hotel keeper in Estes Park, who doesn't even take his rod out of its case from the time his hotel opens in June until it closes in near-October. Then, when the roads are empty, and the innumerable horse trails have ceased to bear the beaten appearance of bridle paths, he walks a hundred and fifty yards in front of his hotel and within hailing distance of town catches all the fish that he or anybody else could desire. He is one of those rare individuals who knows how to wait. There are not many trout fishermen who can do it.

Therefore, the anxious enthusiast turns to a choice of

the remaining possible things — that of owning his own fishing, of becoming the boon companion of a ranchman, who invites him over, or of hitting forth into the so-far un-highwayed wilds and going where the fishing really is, and where he can get at it without rubbing elbows against an angler on either side. Principally he owns it.

It is a condition which is becoming more and more the thing in the tourist Rockies. A lake, high in the hills, with nothing more than a trail to it, and no more purpose in life than to take the seepage of the drifts about it and store them for the irrigation company which has leased it far in the past, becomes suddenly the object of much interest. Far below, a grading outfit takes up its position and begins the building of a road, heavily fenced, and well sprinkled with announcements that there must be no trespassing beyond this point. Carpenters move upward with pack trains and begin the building of log cabins. Ditch men start above the lake to dig retaining ponds — for when one owns one's fishing, one must furnish the fish, purchasing them if possible from the over-supply of the state or government, or buying them from private hatcheries — rules are made, memberships watched as carefully as though this were some exclusive society, and when it is all done, another group of fish enthusiasts sigh with the knowledge that their trout worries are over. It's expensive, that's true, but it is becoming more and more popular in spite of its costliness. Within ten miles of my mountain home is such a club — and I might as well confess that I belong to it — where the investment in boats, retaining ponds, the lake itself, cottages, electric-light plants, land and various other essentials is close to fifty thousand dollars. Not one of the sixteen members calls

himself a rich man. Not one likes to really face the figures of what the blamed thing costs. But once faced, not one really cares. For we belong to that proud and uppish clan that can go there any blamed old time we want to — and catch fish!

Nor is that an unusual case. Fourteen miles in the opposite direction is another lake where men spend money for their fish. And off to the right is another — and over the hill in the direction of Georgetown are still more. It is the rule, rather than the exception now — where there is a community which possesses trout-stricken souls, there also exist from one to a dozen "clubs" where men buy their own fish and the liver to feed them — and then, when the trout are grown, take their payment in the frying pan. With this exception: did you ever notice that a trout fisherman is rarely a fiend for eating trout? Catch them? Yes. Give them away? Fine! But a good sirloin steak makes excellent eating!

Except, of course, upon the trail, when hours of pounding the saddle have given one an appetite that would revel in native pine knotholes, consumed without salt or pepper — and it is to the trail that one turns when one really hankers for fishing as it used to be.

They still grow big, on the trail. There's still the thrill of discovery when one has left the automobile road and followed some dim line through the forest to a stream or lake, unnamed except upon the maps, uncharted as to its fishing holes, untouched by line and fly, except by those of like explorers. There's still the knowledge that maybe, down there in the riffle — if it's the season for them to lie in the riffles — or loafing in the back swirls, there may be a four or five-pounder, longing for the sight of a rightly placed Royal Coachman. And the best of it is,

when one has trailed, with a pack outfit, far from the automobile road, those happy things usually come true.

To say nothing of fish adventures. Such as the time when, having dropped down over snowdrifts and almost impossible rock slides, my outfit last summer came to a tremendous lake, and paused while my pinto debated before deciding to ford the inlet. Then a call came from behind us, from Lee and Will Keller, boy companions of the Steamboat country, joining us from another lake:

“Go on, Spot; it ain’t quicksand.”

But Spot still hesitated, and I dismounted to poke a foot in the sand for the mere sake of assurance — suddenly to halt.

“Gosh, Jack! ” I gasped. “Look at that whopper! ”

Not five feet away, hugging the bank of the inlet current, was a rainbow trout, nearly two feet long, merely lying there and apparently taking life as he found it. Charlie gaped excitedly.

“Gosh, ain’t he tame? ” he asked. “Bet I could catch him.”

Which was quite an assertion, inasmuch as Charlie was hardly a demon with a fly. Jack and I promptly applied the squelching process. If that fish was foolish enough to stay in that stream after ten horses had plunged through it, we’d do the catching.

So, after camp was made, Jack Nankervis and myself, with our rods and our flies and our knowledge, hied us to the inlet. The fish was still present.

“Certainly is a tame old baby,” said Jack, and cast magnificently. But His Fishship didn’t bite. He didn’t even give Jack the satisfaction of noticing the fact that an effort was being made to catch him. Jack rubbed his chin and cast again. And again and again. Then came my

turn, with no better result. Jack stared. "Now, what do you suppose?" he asked. "He ain't spawning. That's a rainbow, and the rainbows finished spawning a month ago. Besides, they ain't strong on spawning in inlets, anyway. Let's try a spinner."

We did. We dragged it in front of his nose. We slapped it all around him. Without result; the fish didn't even budge. At last, a bit amazed and more chagrined, we gave it up and moved onward to newer fields, leaving the occupant of the little stream in full possession. But not for long.

Soon yells and shouts came from the inlet. Wild scramblings on the part of the Keller boys, a tremendous bending of a borrowed rod as Charlie threw his shoulders into action, yanked a two-foot fish — fishermanly speaking — in a wide circle over his head, dropped the rod, leaped frantically a couple of times and then surged madly toward the capture. When Jack and I reached camp, he had his prize in a dishpan while, with wild gesticulations, he told the story.

"Snagged him!" he announced, "with a spinner hook. Missed him two or three times, and he'd move away, up into faster water where I couldn't see him good. So finally the kids here got sticks and herded him down every time he'd run away and finally I got the old hook right under him and let him have it."

"Wonder you didn't break the rod, yanking him like you did," said Jack, then paused in wonderment. For the fish was two feet long — and an inch thick. With all his length he could be spanned by a circling of the fingers. Jack picked him up and pointed. Upon each eye was a white circle, a deep hole in the roof of his mouth showed where the hook of some other fisherman, when this elon-

gated thing was a leaping six or seven pounds of fish fierceness, had penetrated, destroying the optic nerve. A blind rainbow, starving, yet making his fight for life in the current where perchance some food might drift; one learns many things after the catch is in the basket.

Among those things is a spirit of wonderment about all the fine points of trout teasing that one has followed and harped upon. For when one steps away, out upon the trail where conditions remain as they were back in the days when Indian maidens could spear fish—at least the pictures always show them doing it—and where humans are scarce, surprising things happen sometimes, and always to the fellow who knows as much about fishing as—well, it wouldn't be kind to speak that way about a good boy like Charlie.

Except that he really couldn't cast a fly. That is, to the requirements of Jack and myself. And he would insist, when he did get a strike, on seizing the five-ounce rod that he'd borrowed from me and making a baseball bat out of it as he strove to swing his catch out upon the bank with one fell swoop, instead of playing it to shore. And a lot of other things which forced us to break it to him as gently as possible that he couldn't hope to catch big fish by using such methods; that a man who wanted to be a really big fish fisherman should use caution and finesse and lay his fly upon the water in a natural fashion. Fishing, we told him, was the creation of an illusion. The fish did not bite because he wanted to do somebody a favor. He bit because he was hungry, and being hungry, he was watching the top of the water for possible food. Now, if one attempts to create that illusion of real food with something that upon close scrutiny does not resemble

food, one must use every precaution. One must have a riffle, for instance, owing to the fact that the water, in being ruffled by a slight wind, breaks the line of vision, thus causing the fish to believe that the bait is something which it isn't. And a lot more things of a like type, to which Charlie bobbed his head, put his hands in his hip pockets, then in his side pockets, then at his collar-band, jingled his spurs — Charlie always fished a lot better with his spurs on — and announced that he guessed he'd get it all right, and that he'd shore do his derndest. Following which, filled with the righteous knowledge that we'd done our best to help a fellow out, Jack and I took opposite sides of the lake and applied ourselves to the serious matter of catching fish.

The right kind of a riffle was blowing. Before me was a little sandbar — the kind that a rainbow likes to feed on when the wind is stirring up the sand just enough to create the semblance of a foam. I cast — farther and farther — meanwhile wishing that Charlie —

Zowie-e-e-e-e! Hot baby! One of those things that a fellow dreams about. Big as a tenement building and tougher 'n tripe. Curving out of the water in a series of leaps that sent my heart in eight directions at once, swishing to deep water while the reel sang the National Anthem, and coming back twice as swiftly. Again a leap and two more after that and then I was left standing there on the shore with my mouth open, not saying a word — not a single word. Just looking — at the frayed end of a leader that I'd figured on changing after the next cast, seeing that it had begun to get a little weak.

Oh, well, that's the way it goes. Best fish I'd seen in a thousand miles of packing. So, now that the horse was stolen, still wordless, still a bit gummy about the heart,

I sat down and locked the barn by changing my leader. Then I cast again for that fish, knowing full well that I didn't have a chance in the world of catching him. For a full half-hour I just stood there casting; going through the motions. He might come back, though I knew he wouldn't. And of course, he didn't. So I moved on up the lake.

Other fish struck, but they were just fish. Other fish leaped and danced on the ends of their tails and performed curlicues in the water while attached to a fly. I landed them perfunctorily; "horsed them in" to tell the truth and went wearily on. At last, however, to turn, and put a hand to my ear. Something was happening down-shore, something vociferous.

It was Charlie yelling, squalling, in fact, as with both hands on the butt of the rod, he swung it into impossible curves, yanked it this way and that without result, and then, with a leap of retreat, straightened it and, with the pull full upon the line, ran as fast as his legs would carry him far back upon the bar. Something pursued — I could see it even from that distance. Something which Charlie chased wildly for a moment, then captured by the simple expedient of tripping on his spurs and falling, with his prey beneath him. When I reached him, he was still pounding it on the head, regardless of the fact that every blow was a death dealer.

"Didn't want to bust the rod!" he shouted, when I came within hailing distance. "Knowed you'd be sore if I busted that rod. An' I'd forgotten all them things you told me. So when I seen him comin' at me, I just straightened 'er out an' ran. An' he come right in."

Then he ceased his pummeling of the captive and held it up. It was my fish — my six-pound fish; it weighed, in

fact, a fraction more. My six-pound fish, with the broken fly still in his upper jaw!

"Funny thing how I got him," said Charlie. "I tried all them things that Jack 'n you told me, but I just couldn't seem to make 'em work. So I took this here spinner and hung a bunch of ham fat on it an' threw it out and just let it lay there, an' sure enough, all of a sudden this here old pole starts bobbin' an' tryin' to yank itself out of my hands, an' there he'd went an' swallowed the meat an' the spinner an' everything! "

After that, Jack and I rather left Charlie to himself. We could see that he'd never make a fisherman!

## CHAPTER XI

### VARMINTS AND SUCH

WE met Bill Caywood, the Gray Wolf Man, just on the other side of Shingle Peak, in that portion of the Continental Divide of Colorado known as the Flat Tops. His horse was tired from miles of trailless travel. His leather jacket was scratched and torn, his ancient chaps bore evidences of rough work in stretches of trackless wilderness.

“Been out givin’ everything the once over,” said Bill, as he straightened his rifle in its scabbard; “just getting things lined up, you know. Sheep are comin’ in pretty fast now, and as soon’s they start bawlin’ to any extent, there’ll be varmints in plenty. Not so easy this year, either. Came in here the twenty-ninth of June and bucked snow all the way. Still plenty of it between here and Trapper’s Lake. But it’ll be gone in another week, so I thought I’d better be gettin’ ready to string out my traps. Comin’ over to the Castle?”

We were, the “Castle” being the dampest log cabin in or out of captivity, the dirt floor oozing moisture from the seepage of tremendous drifts which still lay in the timber, the winds whistling down from the heights of Shingle Peak, and the little sheet-iron stove battling vainly to lift from it the clamminess which pervaded everything — the logs, the floor, the sawed blocks of wood which served as chairs; even the bedding. Not that Bill minded it. Bill was too busy with other things — such as

the influx of flock upon flock of sheep into the region which formed his protectorate, and the duties which it involved for him. For where cattle once ranged by the thousands, in the old days of the high country when there were no such things as regulations or grazing fees and when cow profits were great enough to allow a margin of gain in spite of winter and predatory losses, there are now sheep — by the million; sheep which fill the stock drives with incessant noise by day and by night, making life miserable for him who is not accustomed to their blatting, creating problems for Forest Rangers in their work of checking and counting and allocation of grazing lands, converting bronco-busting cow-punchers into garnerers of wool, and persons who were once cattlemen into conservators of a form of flesh which once caused guns to slide easily from holsters and bullets to chase each other through a hundred border wars of the West.

And thereby increasing the labors of such men as Bill Caywood. For Bill is a government hunter. That is, he is listed upon the payrolls of that portion of the Agricultural Department known as the United States Biological Survey as a hunter. So are his two hundred or more coworkers, who live as Bill does: in desolate, far-away cabins, or in a bedding roll, or on a faithful saddle horse with a pack animal trailing behind, through the blizzards of winter, the gummy months of spring, the short brightness of summer, and the yellow-emblazoned span of autumn, men who were unknown in their present capacity until ten years ago when the government began "varmint" hunting as a side line, and who will drop into obscurity in perhaps ten years more for the simple reason that their enthusiasm, in all probability, by that time will have deprived them of a job. They are called hunters. They

are really detectives — sleuths of the trailless country — studying the various “varmints” which they must eradicate, and following them down by means of their various frailties, as a police detective would follow down a criminal.

Strange how the similarity runs. Give a criminal in human life a free rein in specialized crime or in a certain locality, and something in his nature inevitably comes to the surface to stamp him with a name: Four-Fingered Mike, Cincinnati Red, Lefty Louie; the list runs on indefinitely. It does the same in animal criminality; one hears of Big Lefty, the wolf, of Old Three Toes, of Old Whitey, of Big Foot, the Renny Coyote, the Butcher Wolf and a hundred others whose names come to them as easily as an alias would come to a safe cracker. When one becomes friendly with government hunters, pounding the saddle for days at a time as they make the rounds of their traps and scent posts, one doesn't argue at all when they refer to themselves as detectives. One sees too many cases where, by taking advantage of one little quirk in animal nature, a snarling renegade bear is sent crashing down the aspens as he strives for escape, and dragging behind him as though it were nothing, a hundred-pound toggle attached to the trap which bites his leg. Or a wolf trapped when the only possible clue to its runway lies, like a plaster-cast impression, in the mark of a single paw in a patch of alkali.

And it has almost as much bearing upon human economics as the work of the police counterpart. “Varmints” — any predatory animal, lion, bobcat, lynx, coyote or wolf, is a “varmint” to a Westerner — are no pikers when it comes to destruction. A bear, for instance, which turns from his regular fare to that of killing cattle



TIMBERLINE



A GOVERNMENT HUNTER AND HIS CABIN



and sheep, causes at least five hundred dollars' worth of damage a year. Every coyote and bobcat — and the former's population is rated in the thousands — brings a fifty dollar loss annually, wolves and lions a thousand dollars' worth, while in exceptions, a real, first-class criminal, like Big Foot the wolf, can accomplish as much as a twenty-five thousand dollar bill of destruction before finally falling before the government hunter or outraged ranchman.

Nor is this all — there is another bill to be considered: that of wild animal life, which isn't plentiful enough in these days to support an army of killers. When one considers that a mountain lion slaughters at least one deer a week, and often two, a closed season for human hunters doesn't seem to be of much assistance. Or when a coyote or wolf band will slaughter an entire herd, caught in a snow valley; when whole nesting areas for ducks are violated and robbed; when flocks of prairie chickens are wiped out — and onward throughout the list — that a predatory animal may live or merely kill for the joy of slaughter — there's a reason for calling them criminals. True, there was a time when such things could happen without visibly diminishing the supply of game. But that time is gone.

I sat one night last summer in the "settin' room" of a ranch house near Hayden, while the mountain static — it's the professional kind — crashed from the loud speaker, and the ranchman, carpet-slippered feet cocked upon a chair, talked on in supreme disdain. His mind was centered on more important things than the program from Denver — the time, for instance, when he had first come into the country to carve a homestead out of the wilderness.

"Yep," he said, "you're right about that country that you came through to-day. Great deer country, that. Those big clumps of quakers, for instance, for 'em to come out into in the evenings to graze. And good brush to hide in during the day. But there aren't any deer left there now — hunted out. Makes a fellow feel a little low when he thinks of what used to be, don't it?" he asked. "Like when I first came over here, forty years or so ago. Didn't worry much about game then."

Then he laughed.

"Well, we did too, in a way. It used to help out a lot — 'specially when we were going to Denver. Wasn't any railroads in this country in those days, and we only went down to town once a year — two hundred miles by wagon, to get our winter supplies. A hundred dollars usually did it; we'd get a whole wagon-load of stuff for that — enough to last us until spring. But of course, we had to stop along the way, and that's where the deer came in. A day or so before we 'd start, a couple of us 'd go out and kill about eight bucks. Dress 'em up nice and all that, and load 'em into the empty wagon. Then, as we 'd go along toward Denver, hittin', you know, through country where game wasn't any too plentiful, we 'd drop off a buck wherever we 'd stay for the night. That made 'em mighty glad to see us, and they'd be mighty willing to put us up for nothing, horses and all, on both the up and down trip." He turned and shut off the radio. "But you can't pay your board bills that way any more. There ain't the buck to do it with. Still — I don't know. It's mighty bad not to have 'em — and it's worse if you do. Deer and ranches don't get along very well when the snow gets deep and a fellow's trying to save all the hay he can get to pull his cattle through the winter."

There lies a reason, not often mentioned, for the fact that year by year the supply of game of all sorts is diminishing. It is not a matter of lust, or of greed, or of pot-hunting; instead, it is a case of economics. When one goes into the hills, for instance, in search of game, he does not often find that game in the places where the story books would have him do it. Day after day have I wandered in districts absolutely remote from civilization — districts silent, ominously silent, with never the movement of a creature, never the chirp of a bird, or bark of squirrel.

Once upon a time, those places may have teemed with wild life, but it is gone now, not for the reason of extinction, but of migration. A migration to suicide, if the truth be known, for animals will go where the food is most plentiful, with the result that one finds far more wild life in the vicinity of a big ranch than he does a dozen miles from that place. The food has lured it there, thereby feeding a feud which begins with the opening of a country, not to cease until the marauders are gone. A deer is a pretty thing to look at in the filtered gold of a quaking asp grove in October. But he isn't so pretty in the snows of January when he and a dozen of his partners leap every fence a ranchman owns, tear down his prized haystacks, then romp merrily on to the wild. Nor are his tracks as thrilling when the owner of a mountain lettuce patch, which he has counted upon to supply him a living, awakes some bright morning to find the lettuce gone and the rows sprinkled with the sharp-pointed imprints of deer hoofs.

Some years ago, for instance, the inhabitants of my town learned that it was possible to procure a small herd of elk merely for the price of freight. They arrived. Jack Nankervis, with other horsemen, surrounded them, and then, speeding upon a difficult job of herding, drove them

over the hill to a new home. It was not long until their presence became known.

"Those elk came down to my place," said a ranchman shortly after the January snows had set in. "They sure are nice, aren't they? Funny how tame cold weather makes 'em. Came pretty near up to the house and just stood around like they knew I'd fork 'em out some hay. And I sure did. They looked so pretty and picturesque!"

Two years passed. The elk herd grew. Into town came the same ranchman.

"Say!" he announced, "if you don't do something about those blamed elk, I'm going to take my 45.70 to 'em. I simply can't stand it! They've been hanging around my place for the last week, tearing down haystacks, jumping fences, and I don't know what all. I've driven 'em out a dozen times, but a man can't stay awake all night just to keep watch of his haystacks."

To which there was a sequel not so long ago, in a Denver hotel. A Wyoming ranchman and myself were eating breakfast and talking of game life.

"Funny, the sob stuff they pull about those elk up in the Jackson's Hole country," he said, "and never get the real story."

"Which is ——?" I asked.

"The way some of the ranchmen kill elk by the dozens and feed 'em to their hogs," he said. "But at that, they've got their side of the matter. When a man's worked all year to grow a crop, and then a herd of elk jumps his fences and comes in and starts to destroying it like a plague — what's a fellow going to do?"

It is a feud between the life of the wild and the growth of civilization. Where the ranch grows and prospers, there goes the wild life, because there is food. The rabbit be-

comes a hundredfold more plentiful, and he must be killed because he eats the young shoots of grain, or takes the bark from trees or raids the garden. The deer and the elk descend upon the hayfields, or wallow in the alfalfa. The birds pick the seeds. Or the prairie chickens hie themselves for the alfalfa.

"What're you doing?" I asked a homesteader one day, far out on the Baggs Route, near the Wyoming line. He was surrounded by barrels and pickling brine and numerous piles of something covered by white cloth.

"Putting down my winter's food," he answered. "If the blamed things insist on eating up everything I've got in the summer, I can at least eat them in the winter."

Those cloth-covered piles were sage hens, a hundred or more to the pile. Thus the battle goes on.

So that, with the decimation steadily in progress, from the hunter, from the rancher and from the cutting down of roving areas, the life of the wild is hardly staunch enough these days to withstand the hundred-deer-a-year food necessities of the mountain lion, or the nest-devastating activities of the coyote. So while he protects one form of wild life, the government hunter does his best to eradicate another, that the scales may at least show a semblance of balance, pottering about in his cabin at nights with the problem of a raider wolf, or studying out a situation of an animal's trail, so that when trapping time arrives, every condition may be right for his capture.

Making conditions right is what makes a hunter. Trapping, in these days, is a science. First the scent, prepared either from glands taken from behind the ears of captured animals or from other portions of the body, and placed expertly upon the "post", which may be anything from a bit of brush to the trunk of a tree. Then the trap,

laid just so — in a position that is sure to catch the beast which comes to investigate the scent, no matter from what angle he may approach. It has been boiled, that trap, to eradicate all scent of iron. The hands which have put it in position have been gloved and those gloves heavily scented. The man himself has approached upon scented shoes, and has spread a blanket before him on which to work. And when that task is done, not a twig remains out of place, not a hummock of dust that has not been smoothed away; everything is exactly as it was before, except for that concealed trap.

And when one learns how great a part the right kind of a scent plays in trapping animals, one can easily see why a hunter, like some ancient alchemist, will work half his life to develop a scent and spend the rest of his existence in guarding it. There was a time in the history of the Western country when mountain lions formed a distinct menace to stock raising, and to every form of game, due to the extreme difficulty of trapping them. A mountain lion is not like a canine. He'll not have runs, for instance, passing over the same district at regular intervals. Perhaps he'll come back the way he went a week later or a month later; the trap must wait for him until it pleases him to pass that way, and the procedure thereby becomes a dragged-out affair. Even when the lion came to a trap line, there was nothing infallible about that method of catching him. The result was a laborious process with horses and dogs and riflemen: the finding of a track, the placing of the canines upon the trail and a chase which might last for hours — or for days. Then everything suddenly changed.

Now the mountain lion is at the threshold of extinction for a simple reason. He's a cat. For years, in the circus,

trainers found that the surest way in the world to make friends with their cat charges was to do the same thing that the proverbial old maid does with her pet tabby — feed him catnip. The same thing has happened to mountain lions, bobcats and the rest of the wildcat tribe, with disastrous results.

It started in Washington with a scientific experiment in the zoo. Naturally, such persons as scientists couldn't take the word of circus people for anything, and the experiment was carried out all the way down the line, whereupon it was fully established that cats liked catnip. Following this discovery, however, came a real one — the disconcerting knowledge that there was no particular oil of catnip sufficiently strong and lasting to serve the purposes of a trapping scent.

The government doesn't lumber about as much as it once did. Since there wasn't the right kind of a catnip scent at hand, a catnip farm was started and catnip grown — a ton of it. From this came a quart of catnip oil, to be distributed in two-ounce portions to the various biological stations and there to be diluted with petrolatum. After that came the test. In Denver, for instance, the junior biologist sprinkled a bit on a bush in his front yard and sat down to watch results. When the first half-hour brought twenty-four cats, to throw spasms of delight about that bush, he decided it was a right good scent. The same thing happens to mountain lions and they are disappearing rapidly now. Out upon the lonely breeze of the high country, the scent of catnip drifts over chasm and valley, and the mountain lion responds. So does the bobcat and the lynx, and cat trapping has become much less of a nuisance than it was.

They do some mean tricks with those scents — these

hunters. In northern Arizona, not so long ago, a hunter used everything he possessed in the pursuit of a wolf, without results. That wolf went right on by to his marauding. Day after day and month after month the killing went on until a distressed hunter was nearly at the end of his rope. Whereupon he sat himself down to think.

"Now, they're naturally curious," he urged, "I wonder if——"

He wondered correctly. A week later he set a trap, and the next day went to look at it. There was his wolf, one leg firmly hooked, while the entire surroundings had been scratched up and circled as though the trapped enemy had been in a perfect frenzy before he approached close enough for the jaws to close on him. The scent had been taken from an animal in an entirely different district; an animal strange to this portion of the country, and the wolf had objected to it. Enough, in truth, to lose his caution and step up to a place he hitherto had avoided.

"Don't ask me how he knew that scent belonged to a wolf from somewhere else," said the hunter. "All I know is that they'll fall for it nearly every time. They know someway; something about that animal tells 'em where he's from, just like clothes often portray the locality a man lives in. Don't believe it? Then just watch a city dog the next time he goes to the country. There'll be a dozen hayseed dogs on his neck in a minute; they know he's a city slicker from his perfume!"

To get back to mountain lions, however; until recently the statement that a mountain lion would, under any conditions, attack a human being was scoffed at with the same derision that one would meet a serious statement that the moon was made of green cheese, and with good

reason. Then there happened the exception to the rule: a report came out of the State of Washington that a mountain lion had killed and feasted upon a boy!

The evidence could not be controverted. A bounty was offered for the killing of the murderous lion, and paid ten days later when a lion which resembled that which had killed the youth was shot within a short distance of the point where the slaying had occurred. Then, six weeks later, another mountain lion was killed.

There had been a bit of discussion as to whether the first lion was really the murderer. With the killing of the second, interested people caused the stomach to be sent to Washington for examination, where it was turned over to the personnel of the Food Habits Research Division of the Biological Survey. Far in one end of that stomach was found a round ball which had refused digestion. And in that ball, a shock of human hair, a thirty-eight caliber bullet, a bit of blue denim and a button. A check-up followed -- and the second lion instead of the first was identified as the murderer.

In fact, the subject of wild animals is a good deal like that of time-tables; subject to change without notice. Time was, for instance, when a saying was common throughout the West to the effect that one must never kill a porcupine, because it was the only animal which could be run down and killed with a club, thus, perhaps, saving some lost prospector or surveyor from starvation. States passed laws protecting the beasts; many of those laws still remain upon the statute books. But the old saying, among the well-informed, at least, has passed out of existence.

They're the pests of the West, these beasts. They're nobody's friend, they're marauders, destroyers and nui-

sances. And they're dangerous. On the trail last summer, Jack and I traveled through several areas which had been visited by forest fires. We passed through other districts which had been visited by porcupines, and the damage seemed to be just about as great. Tree after tree — by the hundreds — stood dead, while about their trunks or upon their limbs were marks of white, where the long, gnawing teeth of the "porkies" — they protrude from the lower jaw like curved chisels — had cut off the bark over the entire circumference. Acre after acre of timber that had been deadened that a spiny creature might glut himself with bark. As for alfalfa — Fred Alispaw, a ranchman in Western Colorado, and myself wandered over his alfalfa fields one day, fields that otherwise would have been a glory to the eye, but which showed lanes and trails and tremendous expanses of down-grass as though a herd of cattle had wallowed there.

"Stock break in on you, Fred?" I asked.

"Nope," he answered. "Porkies." Then with a little catch of pathos, "I wouldn't even kick about that, though, if they hadn't killed my dog."

Just why it is that a dog cannot keep away from a porcupine is more than the average person can understand. Whip a ranch dog for stealing eggs and he'll stay away from the hen's roost. Chastise him for chasing the stock and, as a rule, he'll stop it. But do everything in the world to cure him of fooling around porcupines, and he'll go right back and do it all over again. One night, two years ago, a friend and myself, upon the back porch of a ranch house, the lantern gleaming dully above us, worked for two hours over a dog. He had met a porcupine that evening, and the porcupine had rolled himself

into a ball. There had been the usual dog investigation, an attack, and now, struggling in the grip of my ranchman friend, he presented himself as an animal pincushion. There were quills in his nose, quills in his lips, in his tongue, even deep in his throat; quills which could only be removed by the slow and tortuous process of yanking each one out separately with a pair of pliers. Once a quill is imbedded, it is there to stay, until sheer force of muscle removes it.

At last we got them all out, and a grateful dog whined about us and rubbed against our legs. He had been quilled before, but never seriously, and we gave thanks that at least he had received a sufficient dose to cause him to stop and think the next time he met an enemy of this sort. Three weeks later, there sounded a shot from the lower meadow, and when the ranchman came in, his coyote gun hanging loose in the cup of his arm, he bore the air of dejection that only a man who had lost something beloved can show.

"Had to kill Jack," he said, as I met him. "It didn't do any good — that other dose. I ran out a porkie down there and he was on it in a minute. We never could have gotten them out; he'd even swallowed part of the hide, quills and all, before I could drag him off."

For they never stop, those quills, once they are sent forth upon their journey.

Over by Craig last summer, a veterinary friend of mine performed a post-mortem upon a cow, which had died under mysterious circumstances. When he reached the brain he found the cause — a porcupine quill which had entered the body of the beast, probably at the nose, and worked onward until it reached a vital organ. Nor is this an unusual case; the death of horses, of cattle and of sheep

happens quite frequently, with a porcupine quill as the fatal instrument.

A queer instrument of torture, that quill; with tiny barbs at its point, much like those of a fishhook, and built to take advantage of the actions of the muscles as they cringe from the pain of its entrance. Thus the very efforts of the body to escape the thing which has penetrated it forms a means for that quill to keep working onward to surprising distances.

A hunter friend of mine knows no stopping, once he starts after gray wolves, or coyotes, even to crawling into their dens after them. The home of such a beast is usually sprinkled generously with porcupine quills, since those animals have a love for "porky" flesh and have, to this end, evolved a method of killing them by rolling them on their backs, and attacking them in the chest and stomach, which is unprotected. Then to the den for feasting, and the hunter was accustomed to the exquisite pleasure of yanking porcupine quills from his hands and wrist with every sally against an enemy.

One evidently escaped him. Some time afterward, pains began in his right chest. Then they moved over to his left shoulder, thence into the left arm and to the elbow. At last, a red spot made its appearance, with a tiny black speck in its center.

"Wonder where I got that splinter?" the hunter asked himself, and began to dig. The next day he got it out — a porcupine quill an inch and a half long, which evidently had worked its way across his entire body!

Which should make the porcupine a rather unpopular beast. It is, except from a standpoint of food. For the trapper will tell you that properly cooked a young porcupine doesn't go bad at all. But for that matter, neither

does bear meat — and now and then one of them arises that just insists on being killed before he kills everything in the vicinity.

Not that a bear is by nature a predatory animal. Often he's blamed for many crimes he doesn't commit. But that usually happens when a ranchman comes upon him feeding upon the carcass of a beef that has been killed by a mountain lion and takes it for granted that the bear itself committed a murder. When a government hunter starts after a bear, he must be accused, tried and convicted before the traps are set; for bears are still game, to be preserved for the rifle of the sportsman if possible, rather than that of the professional hunter. After all, bears, in the main, are pretty good folks as long as they are in their native haunts. Put them in captivity, or in too close proximity with humans, and they are treacherous, dangerous brutes, comical and entertaining one minute and ripping the daylights out of an over-zealous nature lover the next.

For the person who believes that the bear is a clumsy, lumbering creature is badly mistaken. He can be as swift as lightning; a paw can swipe one so rapidly that its course can hardly be seen, and the blow is like that of a pile driver. Last summer in the high Rockies, a sheep herder came back to his camp to find it greatly disturbed, evidently by a bear. An ardent believer in the slowness and clumsiness of the brute, he waited for it the next night, his armament consisting of a sheep knife. It was only a small black bear at that, hardly larger than a mastiff. Its portion of the fight consisted of two blows, merely delivered in passing, as it were. The last I heard of the sheep herder, he was in a hospital at Rawlins, Wyoming, not expected to live.

He's a fighter, is the bear — the fiercest fighter that the hills know, once he swings into action. Enough of a fighter, in fact, to make history in the mountains; the man who survives a hand-to-hand struggle with a bear is far more famed than the wildest two-gun man that the West could offer. Bill Poronteau, for instance.

We rode the trail last summer, the one where Bill Poronteau fought it out with the silvertip, more than thirty years ago, myself and Jack Nankervis, who, a decade later, put a bullet between the eyes of one of the cubs which caused one of the greatest battles in mountain history. From the heights of the ancient trail leading down from Yankee Doodle Lake, we saw the slight clearing where it all had occurred, and like boys in a wax-works, we halted and looked at it; we who were fortunate enough to see the place "where Bill Poronteau fought the bear!" That means something, out here in the hills; that was one of those struggles generally described as epic.

Not that Bill had intended it. That morning he had saddled his horse, ridden over the hill from Central City down bubbling Jenny Lind Creek and up into South Boulder Park on the shoulder of the Continental Divide, on a search for deer. He tied his horse and started forth, suddenly to halt at a noise in the brush and to kneel that he might investigate.

Two silvertip cubs were there; Poronteau gazed for a second, then whirled in a frenzy of fear. Rising to the right, and hurtling toward him with the speed of a tackling football player, was the gigantic mother!

There was no time for the rifle. An instant and the tremendous form had launched upon him, to knock him far to one side and bring him breathless against a sapling, to which he clung with grim desperation. It was a law of

hunting, as Poronteau knew it — to struggle with every atom of strength against the possibility of being pulled into a bear's grasp and he intended to stay there as long as his muscles lasted. The bear came on.

But not to seize him. She rose, growling, and put her paws on his shoulders, as though resting herself. And there they stood, a rifleless man, an angry she bear, while the seconds passed like hours. Poronteau's right hand began to move ever so slowly for his hunting knife. An inch, two inches. Then the action was noticed, and with a spasm of speed, the bear seemed to attack at a dozen places at once. She caught his arm, tearing it like the slashing of knives. She pulled him down, and then, her great mouth opening, took his head in it, as though to crush his skull. But something intervened — a blow from Poronteau's knife, driven with all the force that a desperate man could know, and ripping a gash in the silvertip's vitals for more than a foot, while the enemy, crazed by pain, sought to loosen her hold on his head. But her teeth had dug deep by now, and as she pulled back, the scalp of the man loosened, to be dragged farther, farther — until at last it was brought over his eyes, like a horrible, ghastly mask. But he continued to fight, sightless, bleeding from a dozen tooth and claw marks; still slashing and driving with his knife.

They tumbled together to the ground. Then, with a great groan, the bear rolled, caught him up and threw him a dozen feet against a tree where he sank, a knee dislocated from the impact. After that quiet, for minutes, for a half-hour. At last a dazed man crawled to his horse, and in some herculean fashion managed, in spite of that dislocated knee, to mount it. Three hours later, the men at a little sawmill saw a ghastly thing rolling in the saddle

as a horse, following the homing instinct, moved slowly up Jenny Lind Creek. It was the semi-conscious Poronteau, and they took him in, to dress his wounds, care for him, and finally take him to Central City.

We passed that sawmill last summer. It is only so much rotting wood now; the mill itself long has disappeared. But the story of Poronteau's bear lives on in the hunting annals of the hills.

"Things like that scare a fellow," said Jack, as our pack train plodded slowly by the mill. "Now when I saw that silvertip — the one that 'd been a cub when Poronteau got mauled — it sort of sent a shiver down my back. I just had to plug him between the eyes."

"But how did you know it was the cub?" I asked.

"Oh, Bill identified him," said Jack. "You see Poronteau lived. All tore up, but he lived just the same. One place, at least, where a man was tougher 'n a bear, because they found the old she-brute deader 'n a doornail. Yep, Bill took just one look at that bear of mine and said, 'It's the picture of his mother,' he said. And he ought to know. He was close enough to that old she-devil!"

Which is going some in the way of identification, and which also should be evidence that a bear, once it is dragged from its usual placid existence, is a worthy foe-man, and a wily one.

"Do you know," said Bill Caywood last summer, "I tried for three months to get a big bear that was bothering around here. He'd kill cattle. He'd kill sheep; even horses. I set trap after trap for him and it didn't do a bit of good. Then I found out he was a digger.

"Now there are a lot of things to find out about an animal when you start after him. Whether he's a digger, or a gummer, or a scratcher, or anything of that kind. A

digger, for instance, is an animal that always wants to dig around whatever he's investigating and sort of find out about it from the bottom up. A gummer's an old animal, coyote or wolf, that's clawed and bit until his teeth are worn clear down to his gums, and he ain't good for pullin' down cattle any more. A good, fresh wolf can hamstring a cow-brute, just like that, and cut the tendon of Achilles, or bite off the tail — bob-tailin,' it's called — like it'd been done by a cleaver. But a gummer, well, he just champs and champs; I've seen cattle that 'd been literally choked to death. But about that bear:

“ I fooled around with him and found that whenever I set out a long log for a toggle — a weight, you know, attached to the trap — he'd just walk that log to the end, then turn and dig under the trap an' reveal it, then go about his business. So I just set myself down and thought. The next night, I set out a trap with two logs, one of 'em concealed, and acting as the toggle, and the other one layin' in plain sight and not bein' of any use at all, except as a decoy. Well, he walked that log and stepped off at the end, just like he'd always done. Only one trouble about it all. I'd moved the trap to the end of the log, and he'd stepped into it. Got to think of those things when you're outguessin' animals.”

During that outguessing, you run into many queer things — an example, for instance, of the balancing power of animals. During the chase of a large bear last summer, trapped, and dragging a twenty-eight-pound trap and a hundred-pound toggle, a hunter found he had ascended a quaking asp sapling to within a few feet of the top. That sapling was not five inches thick at its base and could easily have been bent by the weight of a human being. Yet the straightness of the claw marks showed that

the bear had ascended nearly to the tip, pulling with it a dead weight of one hundred and twenty-eight pounds, turned around and come down again without having even slightly bent the tree!

So it goes in the business of animal sleuthing: watching habits, individualizing the catch, and profiting by that individualization and by every weakness. When the hunter, for instance, hears in lambing time that a gray wolf has broken forth and is raiding the sheep herds, he doesn't begin looking at once for a gray wolf as a quarry. Instead, he looks for the beast that may become wolf-like about that time — a female coyote with young. Day after day he searches the country for a disused badger hole, temporarily occupied as an apartment by a mother coyote. Usually he finds it. Then he reaches for a stick, places it in the entrance, hangs his glove on it, departs, and at his leisure returns with his rifle. He knows the mother will be there; as long as that scent of human is at the doorway of her apartment, she will neither leave nor pass it to rescue her young, remaining instead in the vicinity, an easy prey for the hunter.

Her killing accomplished, he reaches in the hole, drags out the pups and clubs them to death.

In fact, the coyote, while wily to a great measure, is not the marvellous beast which fiction has made of it. True, aged renegades assume a great degree of sagacity. True, too, the coyote is the most persistent of all predatory animals. Naturally a plains animal, he has extended his field to inconceivable places; where humans go, there will he go also. Time was when the coyote was not known in the High Country; now often he can be found there more easily than in the lower lands. Nor is it due to the fact that he has been chased there; coyotes are scarce in

the vicinity of timber line in the spring; they're all below where the sheep are congregated in some protected, grassy area for lambing. As the noisy flock moves upward, the raiders move with them; coyotes have been trapped at an altitude as high as eleven thousand feet.

He is persistent too in his chase. Hunters have found evidences of where deer have been run down after a perfect relay race, in which one coyote takes the lead until exhausted, then gives way to a fresh runner. They will invade marshes for the eggs of water birds; where there is living food there will be the coyote, and someway or other, he'll manage to get it.

And they are persistent, almost beyond belief, in the maintenance of life. In the office of Stanley Young, junior biologist, in Denver, are two coyote skulls, each with a mark where a bullet, fired by some angry ranchman, had broken the lower jaw. On one, the bones were snapped almost at the hinge, while on the other the fracture occurred within an inch and a half of the tip. A fully fractured jaw is a serious thing for a human being, aided by surgery and nurses to feed him through tubes. A wild animal has none of these advantages, yet both those coyotes had someway managed to exist, and both those jaws had healed, one with a knitting an eighth of an inch across!

Such things as this have given rise to many imaginative qualities which do not exist: of the ability of an old coyote, for instance, to communicate all he has learned to the younger members of his band — like the conducting of a school in crime. Wild things, weird things, particularly as regards the gray wolf.

That's when the real hunter's eyes light, when one mentions the gray wolf. An animal worth sleuthing after, they'll tell you. For to the hunter, the gray wolf occupies

the same position in predatory animaldom that the elephant does in the circus. Other animals may be vicious, or comical, or have this or that or the other evidence of personality. But the gray wolf has everything.

"Why, I've caught wolves an' kept 'em alive that 'd be just as gentle as a kitten," said Bill Caywood from his stump-chair in his damp cabin, "act like they just loved me to death. But just let a dog come around and let me pet that dog — say, they'd kill him in a minute and slash me too if they got a chance; they're just that jealous.

"Yep, they've got everything, gray wolves have. Jealousy and greed and love and hate and all them things that folks have. And sense. Never forget one time, when I was over-anxious to get one of 'em. There used to be an old wolf that ran from Willow Creek to the Flat Tops. A lone wolf, he was — worked all by himself, you know. Everybody was trying to get him; he was a bad actor. Why, Bob Coates had a trap line set out for him two hundred miles long. But it didn't do any good. That old wolf kept right on working and he got the reputation of being able to duck out of any trap that could be set for him.

"Well, when they put me on him, he'd joined up with two other wolves, a small one and a big one, so, seein' this was the case, I thought maybe I'd be able to get 'em by trail trappin' — you know, studyin' out their gaits from their marks in the trail and figurin' just about the places where they usually put down their feet and settin' traps there to snag 'em. But it didn't do any good. Them wolves finally got so they wouldn't travel on the trail at all, and something else had to be done. Well, after I'd worked a long time, I got the small one, but those two big ones kept right on the job. Sometimes, they'd bust loose

on a rampage and kill as many as six head of cattle in one night, and there was me, trailin' around and trying to figure out some little weakness that 'd nail 'em. Then finally I found it out — the old boy was a digger. When I set my traps the next time, I got 'em both.

"That is —" and Bill grinned — "I trapped 'em. But I wasn't through. The smaller one, he stayed put where the trap had nailed him, but the big one lit out, and me after him, trailin' him horseback. I'd had a broken ankle an' it wasn't well yet — it was about all I could do to get around. Well, after a long time, I see him raise up, and I dropped off my horse to get a shot. But I couldn't see him then, and stood weavin' there, cussin' my luck, when all of a sudden, he raised up right in front of me!

"I never did see a wolf that looked meaner 'n he did. I raised my gun and yanked at the hammer to pull it back and my heart gave a kind of a thump. It was stuck — tighter 'n sixty, and that wolf just seemed to know it. I couldn't run with that broken ankle, and I couldn't get to my horse, and I couldn't pull back the hammer of that gun — while that big old boy kept his eyes straight on me and his tail stuck out, and he kept comin' step after step, step after step. If he'd have rushed at me, he'd have got me. But he didn't. He just walked slow and steady, right for me — and then that hammer let go! Didn't take long for me to shoot, either," said Bill quietly.

It is the same lure that holds the detective to the trail, month after month and year after year — either to catch his criminal or to lose him — but always with the hope ahead. Even if that hope sometimes is fulfilled in a most prosaic way. Like the hope of catching old Three Toes of the Apishipa.

A fiction animal was this particular Three Toes. She

had learned the menace of traps years before, first with one foot, then with the other, each trap having taken a toe off one foot. Perhaps that had affected her temper, for when she went after a herd of cattle, she knew no limits. She would "bob tail", she would raid and kill merely for the lust of it. Then one day she discovered the mother instinct.

Evidently, however, wolves were not for her. Gradually she worked her way into a ranch and, evading traps and hunters, lured forth the ranch dog, a collie, to become her mate. At last he returned, but when the spring came, he disappeared anew, once more with Three Toes of the Apishipa.

The years passed, with hunters setting trap lines along every runway, but without avail. The biological survey was becoming desperate. At last there came the time when hunters began to study trails with a new idea — that of planting dynamite at stated intervals, so that when the beast came that way, no matter how much she might dodge in or out of the trail, she would trip a release, thus firing a charge of powder that would blow up the landscape for fifty feet around, taking her with it.

And so, just when the plans were completed, Old Three Toes, a bit hungry, walked calmly into a ranch yard, approached two bulldogs that were feeding, stole their food, and was so busily eating it that she didn't notice the ranchman who saw her, walked all the way back to his house, got his rifle, walked back again — and fired the fatal shot!

Animals are that way. One really can't go by rule on them, either as to what they'll do or where they'll be. Last summer, we rode for more than a week through one of Colorado's great game preserves. Our trail was a per-

fect maze of tracks — everything from bear to lions, deer to elk, but search as we might, we did not see anything wilder than a ground hog. Then one morning we dropped over McClure Pass and came out upon the wagon road leading from Glenwood Springs to Marble. Beyond the road ran the tracks of a railroad. The first thing we saw was an automobile, wallowing through mud-holes, and roaring its announcements of civilization. The second was the every-other-day passenger train, screeching through a cañon. And the third thing was a four-point buck, which jumped from the brush beside the road, and as though giving us an exhibition, took his own sweet time in swimming the Crystal River!

## CHAPTER XII

### DRAW, STRANGER!

ONE of the things which obsessed Jack Nankervis and myself whenever we struck a deserted town was bullet holes. There's a fascination in the sound of distant thunder, with the result that, when our pack outfit had been stowed in the most likely cabin and the horses rolling in the grass which thrived along what once had been the main street, we would move forth upon a common bent, not to halt until we had reached the ramshackle remains of the saloon, or dance hall, there to hunt for bullet holes as children would hunt for four-leaf clovers, or an old lady for a needle.

Bullet holes in the floor, or in the ceiling, or in the heavy logs, which, now chinkless, still formed a rampart against the weather in the preservation of ancient memories. Sometimes the search would be a long one, sometimes a brief affair, but it generally would end with:

"Here's one!"

Then, connoisseurs of sudden death, we'd stand and look it over, reconstructing the crime, as they say in the detective stories. A hole in an ancient log; splinters clustered about a blackened circle; perhaps a bullet fired in defense, perhaps one in the rollicking innocence of some gentle soul who cared for nothing except to see a tenderfoot jump, and apologized profusely if he happened by mistake to puncture his victim in the midriff; perhaps the swiftly sure missile of a bad man, avenging

the death of some well-beloved partner. Probably the last named — at least, in imagination. For somehow, imagination will have its innings when it comes to the Western bad man, slow to anger, quick to forgive, tender-hearted as a babe, good to women and children and just wonderful to his mother; the good-bad man with his long mustaches, turning slowly from the bar as he eyed his adversary, and drawling, that he might give his tormentor the best of the bargain:

“Draw, Stranger!”

Because, that's what all bad men did — in imagination. What they did in fact is quite another matter. When one ceases to read the long-distance accounts of Western killers and delves beneath the surface, he's liable to come out of it all with some of the glamor rubbed off, and the thought bumping around in his head that they weren't such Robin Hoods after all and that maybe — just maybe — a better accounting might find them merely a low set of melodramatic murderers. Which is a bit hard on the bad men. But then the bad men were a bit hard on others, so it makes the account even.

“Tell you about those old fellows,” said my friend John Kuykendeall, as we sat together one night in a fishing cabin at timber line. John hit the bad man area of the West as a boy in '86, and grew to know the time when he could call them by their first names. “Tell you,” he repeated, “the man who killed in the old days — unless of course, he was a public officer like Wild Bill Hickok — did his killing for the same reason that a gangster kills to-day; because he had the killing instinct. And that's what started a lot of others on the same trail too — the instinct to kill.

“Just like a police dog,” he explained further. “Now,

there's nothing gentler when he's trained right than a police dog. But you let him get excited once and kill a sheep, and he's done for. You'll find him sneaking off every night or so and knocking over a lamb or a ewe. That's the way it was with the old-time killers. One of them would get somebody else started—it 'd work in an endless chain. Like Chico.

“Up in my country — Wyoming — it got so that certain districts in the old days felt that they had to have a boss. Or somebody felt they ought to boss the district. Anyway, there was Chico, and he ruled things with a rough hand. When somebody did something that he didn't like, he'd draw a six-gun and snap the hammer, and that was the end of the argument. Didn't have a trigger on his gun at all; he'd had that taken off, so as to facilitate matters. He'd aim his gun where he wanted to shoot, pull back the hammer with his thumb and let it go. Then somebody'd come along and gently remove the remains. One night, the gang was all in camp and Chico took a notion that a fellow named Cooper wasn't needed any longer in this world. So, as Cooper began to run, Chico began to shoot and things looked mighty tough for the Cooper clan.

“An inoffensive fellow, up until now, this Cooper. But all of a sudden he changed. Chico 'd shot him a time or two, and Cooper figured that he was done for. The result was that all his fear left him. He was going to die, anyway; and death couldn't be any worse than it was right now. So he stopped stock-still, turned around, calmly pulled his gun and proceeded to make a lead mine out of the fellow who'd been trying to kill him. When what was left of Chico was removed from the scene, Cooper found that he was the new boss. Well, the instinct had been

aroused in him and when he got through with his period of domination, Chico's record looked like a dirty deuce.

"You see — it's the killing instinct. Had to have it. And if you didn't have it — well, there was a friend of mine up there who got jumped by a fellow with a knife in his hand. A straight out-and-out attempt at murder. When they got my friend to the doctor, his chances were pretty slim — he had almost been disemboweled — with the result that as he lay there with his life in the balance, he made a solemn, death-bed resolve that if fortune should turn his way and his life be spared, he'd kill his assailant, even if he hanged for it. Luck was with him. He got well.

"He bought a rifle. He watched his enemy and studied his movements of everyday life. He learned that every day at a certain hour, he rode up a long hill where one could watch from ambush. So my friend hid himself, with his rifle across his knee, and waited. The hour approached, and with it a speck in the distance which resolved itself into a man on horseback. Slowly the enemy came nearer — and still nearer. My friend looked at the chamber of his repeating rifle; the cartridges all lay in place, long brassy things with steel jacketings. Six of them, and if one of them did not do its work, there would be another to rectify the mistake. The figure on horseback came closer, moving slowly, a perfect target for this waiting man in ambush. There would be no one to see, no one to know, no one to testify. A finger fondled the trigger. Closer. A hundred yards. Fifty yards. Twenty-five yards. Then the victim rode on by, safe and sound, while in his ambush a sweating man lowered his gun. As he told me later, he just couldn't make that trigger finger behave. It wouldn't give the pull necessary to send out that bullet.

You see, he didn't possess the killing instinct — and a fellow simply had to have it if he wanted to put notches on his gun."

The killing instinct — and something else. A spirit of egotism. Many a rare old pelican back in ancient days spent his life announcing that he'd die with his boots on, and fulfilled the announcement by doing something to justify it, for the misguided feeling of glamor and self-exaltation that there was in it. When one becomes the confidant of old-time Westerners in their frank moments, one learns that there was a certain essence of professionalism and theatrics about it all. The long hair, for instance. The careful building of an "appearance", that would give one the "Western air." The strutting, the "private graveyards." The use of a peculiar language which was indigenous to the West — and which was unusual in that the people who filled up the West were as a rule not born there, but very often had migrated from such prosaic places as Iowa and Ohio and Illinois! One of the gentlest, most unobtrusive men I know is Mike Russell, of Deadwood, South Dakota. He wears a ministerial appearance, Lord Cheltenham side whiskers, and all his life has used excellent English. I doubt if "that thar" or "Stranger" ever passed his lips. Yet Mike was a bartender in Salina during the days of Custer and Wild Bill and the building of the Kansas Pacific. But, as Mike explains it, they kept him too busy serving drinks to allow any time in which to take on the fashions of the day.

Which might be construed to mean that there was a certain amount of the theatrical with the egotism necessary to showmanship, in some of those ancients with notches on their guns, leading naturally to such things as

"honor" and the avenging thereof, among a certain class of individuals which was not as large as one might suppose. Because, when one investigates the roll of the bad men of the West, outside of a common, lawless gang of criminals which might exist in any community, the list was not a terribly long one. The same ones covered a good deal of territory.

In other words, a bad man didn't simply pick out a community, announce to the populace that there was eminent need of a killer, and then settle down to the serious business of being bad. He drifted — usually with the railroad camps which were being established in the van of the Union Pacific as it worked to its junction with the Central Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah, the Kansas Pacific as it blazed the way across the prairies of Kansas toward Denver, the gold and silver camps which boomed to-day and died to-morrow, or, in fact, any new community where law had not been established and where a first-class, bang-up bad man could usually count on enough friends to pack a citizens' jury when he had inadvertently shot the daylights out of somebody and needed a friend at court. In spite of all that has been written about the swift, sure justice of the West, the hurried hangings and on-the-spot retribution for infractions of the law, it generally turns out upon investigation that the bad man traveled a pretty long trail before he turned up his boots or decorated a rope. Perhaps that's where the expression of "getting away with murder" was originated. Because they certainly did it.

The father of a friend of mine, as an example, happened to be the judge who presided over the Miner's Court which tried McCall, a perfect gentleman of the

true Western bad-man type, whose egotism demanded that he be known through the rest of his life as the person who had killed Wild Bill Hickok.

This was in Deadwood, South Dakota, and a good many years had passed since Wild Bill Hickok had, in his line of duty, completed his various deeds of eradication which had reduced considerably the ranks of the Western bad man. Wild Bill Hickok had in fact ceased many of his activities and was just plodding along as a first-rate gambler. His sight was not as keen as in other days — no longer could he do such things as killing a crow on the wing with a six-gun — a little trick which he once was wont to perform, or picking off a man who fired at him from the dark while Wild Bill stood in the brightly lighted door of a saloon. Wild Bill was, in fact, largely Tame Bill, and so the egotistical Mr. McCall walked to the door of a room in which Hickok was playing cards and shot him from behind. Thereby one would say, constituting murder, for two reasons: one being that Wild Bill hadn't been informed that he was about to be shot, and the other being, that there was no justification, even in frontier law, inasmuch as Wild Bill's killings had been in the line of duty, either as a marshal or as an officer of the United States Government.

Deadwood was real heated up over it. They put McCall in jail, following which they made elaborate preparations to give him a trial and quite properly and thoroughly hang him. They selected guards with drawn revolvers to assure themselves that there would be no attempt at rescue. They brought forth the evidence that this was a real, regular, first-class, shoot-'em-in-the-back murder, and while the jury was out, my friend's father talked it all over with an officer of the court.

"There can't be any verdict but guilty, can there?" he asked the sheriff.

"Sure not," replied that personage. "Bound to find him guilty."

"That's what I think. Now, we'll expedite this as much as possible. As soon as the jury turns in its verdict, I'll hear what he has to say and then sentence him to hanging. I'd suggest that the execution be carried out forthwith."

The sheriff agreed to that too. No use in having a murderer on one's hands if he could be hanged instanter and gotten out of the way.

Thus the arrangements went on. Then the jury came in, and with one accord announced that the members had carefully weighed all the testimony and found the defendant — not guilty!

After the judge had gained his breath, and the courtroom had cleared, and California Joe and Texas Jack Omohundro, old scout partners of Wild Bill, were burning up the hills in pursuit of the now fleeing Mr. McCall that they might aid him to be hanged another day, which he was, the presiding officer of the court pulled himself out of his amazement long enough to ask a juryman how on earth they'd ever established that state of innocence. The juryman spread his hands in argument.

"Look here," he said. "There wasn't any question but what he murdered Wild Bill. But Wild Bill was a gambler, wasn't he? Now wouldn't it look fine for the respectable citizens of this town to go out and hang somebody that'd killed a gambler? Why, it 'd set the gambling element up so that the first thing we knew, they'd be running the town!"

To tell the truth, in spite of all that one hears about the Vigilantes and Citizens' Committees and so forth, Law

in the old days wasn't so different from Law of the present time. Either a murderer got away with it — or he didn't. Usually he did, until somebody else who was quicker with the gun than he, and a bit more egotistical about his "honor", performed the task of ridding the community of a nuisance and then became a pest himself until somebody else in the endless chain romped along and stuffed him with bullets. Of course, justice was swift when it happened. But it often didn't happen for a long time. Sometimes it didn't happen at all.

"There wasn't much difference," said Jack one evening as he bent over the grill stove in camp and industriously flipped flapjacks. "You read about how fellows get out of murder and work the jury for an acquittal and think it's terrible. Then somebody rises up and wishes for the old days of Law and Order. But I don't know. Seems like things run along pretty much in the same groove.

"Like one Saturday night, I was finishing the scrubbing out of my butcher shop over in Nevadaville, when I heard some shooting. Of course, there was always more or less gun-play on Saturday night, but this sounded serious. So when I got through, I took a stroll, and sure enough, here was a fellow lying in the middle of the street, gasping out his life. Well, I helped pick him up and we carried him into a poolroom and laid him on a table, where he promptly passed out, and about that time the sheriff came along and beckoned me off to one side.

" 'I know where the fellow is that killed him,' he said, 'and I need a deputy. Better come along with me, Jack.'

" 'Course I was young then — and, I don't know, it seems I've just been mixed up in that sort of thing all my life. So I strapped on a gun and we went down to the house where the fellow who'd done the killing was hiding

out, corralled him peaceably enough and took him to jail. Then everything quieted down until a week or so before the trial, when his brother came into the store.

“‘Jack,’ he said, ‘want to take a little fishing and hunting trip?’

“‘Can’t,’ I said. ‘Too much work here at the shop.’ And I went on cutting meat. But he still stood there.

“‘Yes, you do,’ he says. ‘Everybody’s going. A nice little excursion, all expenses paid. Either fish or hunt, whichever you want to do. Over in Boulder Park. Fact is, some of the folks are figuring on staying over there awhile and working in a mine we’ve got.’ I kept right on sawing steak.

“‘Nope,’ I said. ‘Nobody to take my place here in the shop.’

But even that didn’t do.

“‘We’ll look after that,’ he said. ‘Now, you need a little rest.’

Then I stopped and looked at him.

“‘Until this trial’s over, you mean?’ I asked him, coming slam-bang to the question. He just grinned.

“‘Well, since you put it that way — you could stay a little longer if you wanted to. But on the other hand, you could come home just as soon as you felt like it after the trial was over. How about it?’

“Well, I sawed another steak, and then I wiped my hands on my apron.

“‘Not to give you a short answer,’ I said, ‘I guess I’ll stay here and testify.’

“That didn’t set so well, so he mentioned something about not wanting to use force or anything of that kind, but that it might be best for me to take a little fishing trip, and that made me mad.

“‘Now, I tell you what,’ I said. ‘You know where my place of business is, and you know where my house is, and you know the time of day I leave this shop here and go home. So any time you want to hop on me, you just hop, but I’m going to stay here and testify at that trial.’ That’s just what I said, and do you know, them fellows seemed to half-way like me for it. Seemed to sort of make a hit with ’em that I’d had enough spunk to say what I thought.”

“But what about the trial?” I asked.

“Oh, the trial,” chuckled Jack, as he tossed another flapjack into the air, “I was the only real witness there was, and I hadn’t seen the actual shooting. Everybody else ’d gone fishing, by request. So the lawyer told the jury what a fine man this fellow was, and how kind and good-hearted and everything he’d always tried to be, and the jury turned him loose.”

There ever existed a sweetness of disposition in the heart of a bandit or a straight out-and-out killer — when he wasn’t killing somebody. When one talks to the old-timers of the doings of the Vigilantes, there is always a portion of the story that remains the same: the crowd that gathered in the darkness just outside the trial place, bent on a rescue if possible, because the gentleman who was about to be kicked off a dry-goods box with a rope around his neck was always so good to his pals, to say nothing of his kindness to little children and dumb animals. That is, when he wasn’t plying his trade. One of the most tear-starting letters I ever read was written by Bob Younger of the Younger-James gang of bandits, when he was dying in prison, a letter beseeching permission to go back to Missouri and visit his dear, old, gray-haired mother. In fact, it seemed, to be a first-class out-

law, one simply had to have, tucked away beneath his rough exterior, a heart that was no harder than mush. Jesse James, for instance, and that other gentleman who was:

“The dir-r-r-r-ty little coward,  
Who shot Mr. Howard,  
Laid Jesse James in his grave.”

The same being Mr. Robert Ford, who eradicated two birds with one stone as the poem indicates, inasmuch as Mr. Howard and Jesse James were the same, the Howard part being his nom de plume, as, quiet and gentlemanly and serene, he lived in St. Joseph, Missouri, with his wife and family, while the rewards for his capture, dead or alive, mounted higher and higher, finally to the climax of ten thousand dollars. A sum of money which appealed mightily to Bob Ford, a high-powered, go-getter of a young fellow, as they 'd say nowadays. So neglecting to mention the fact of what he was about to do, he waited until Jesse James got up on a chair to straighten a picture, and while engaged in this pretty little family pose, pulled the trigger of a forty-four-caliber on a fifty-one frame, thus thoroughly ruining Jesse. Following which, he pleaded guilty to murder, was pardoned immediately, got his ten thousand dollars and went forth into the world, a young man with a lot of honor and a lot more egotism, because he was the man who had killed Jesse James. While various other egotistical gentlemen immediately became obsessed with a like desire to kill the man who'd killed the man who'd killed so many other men, and the game went merrily on. The queer part about it being that they were all such fine fellows! Jesse, for instance.

Sudden Death and its various allies always have seemed to dog my tracks. A long time ago when the spell of the circus faded for the time in the spell of newspaperdom — back in the days of brown derbys and peg-leg pants — I got a job on the *Kansas City Star*. Whereupon George Longan, the city editor, took one look and decided I'd make a wonderful person to spend the last nights with condemned men and then, having properly ingratiated myself, walk with them to the scaffold. It went fine for thirteen hangings and a lynching and then, rather apologetically, I asked if I couldn't have a change of duty. So he ruffled the pages of his assignment book, thought seriously, and told me to go down to Excelsior Springs and see how Mrs. Samuels was getting along — Mrs. Samuels being the mother of Jesse James.

It was the beginning of a number of visits. A woman of determined, almost rugged features, with a stump of an arm where a bomb, thrown into the house by the Pinkertons in their efforts to uplift Jesse James, had exploded and hit her instead of her son, Mrs. Samuels lived in an ancient farmhouse a few miles from Excelsior Springs, with a sign, crudely lettered upon a weather-blackened fence. It read:

“Jesse James Farm.  
Admission 25 cents.”

Which showed that Mrs. Samuels wasn't letting any opportunities go by. On Sundays, she'd sit upon the careening porch — it was one of those typical Missouri farmhouses of an older day, with a two-story affair in front, edging off into a log cabin which stretched far to the rear — and wait for trade, a little, one-armed woman in a white dress, ready and willing to tell her story, show

the stump of her arm, cuss the Pinkertons, tell exactly how the Yanks took her second husband, Doctor Samuels, and strung him up to an apple tree until his tongue stuck out, pose for her picture, weep over the grave of Jesse James, and spit at a picture of Abraham Lincoln, which she kept for the purpose, all for the trifling sum of twenty-five cents, a quarter of a dollar. A great show, for one who liked that sort of thing, with the result that Sunday afternoon often found Mrs. Samuels and myself sitting under the trees at the side of the house by Jesse's grave — where there was everything; the flowers, the headstone, the oblong mound; everything except Jesse, who happened to be buried somewhere else — talking over the life of the bandit in general. And it seemed that a great many persons had made a Horrible Mistake, because Jesse had always been such a good boy, and wonderful to his mother. A man, for instance, who loved his home and home life, and who didn't really rob banks and railroads and fair grounds, or kill people because he was a bandit. The truth was simply the fact that the Civil War, in which he had been a rather enthusiastic member of the Southern side, hadn't been correctly umpired and that Jesse resented the decision. That was all; he wasn't a bandit. He was still merely fighting the Lost Cause and causing the North as much trouble as possible. About this time she'd usually purse her lips and with a quick turn of her head, deluge at long distance the picture of President Lincoln, being unusually careful, it seemed, to have a chromo of him at various strategic points; this one was on the logs at the side of the house. If it hadn't been for Lincoln, her good boy Jesse wouldn't have been forced to rob trains and that sort of thing; the war had rather made him a wanderer, she said. But when the conversation turned upon

Bob Ford, there was no mincing of words. That fellow, it seemed, was a pretty bad egg.

An ingrate, a coward, a murderer that would shoot a good man in the back, an animal with a very strong scent. It wasn't hard at all to tune Mrs. Samuels up on the subject of Bob Ford; merely mention the name and one was sure to get his twenty-five cents' worth.

Last summer, there came a sequel to those visits of years ago. In the gathering night, Jack and I, walking that we might rest our weary horses, stamped through a red-gulleyed lane which once had formed the main street of the now deserted, ramshackle, ghostly town of Bachelor, Colorado. Far away, lights twinkled in the valley; soft clustering lights, growing slowly closer. An hour passed. The moon rose, and we found ourselves upon a ridge above those twinkling, peaceful lights. No sound of traffic came from below. No noise of hurly-burly, such as once existed. For those lights were the street illuminations of that place about which Cy Warman once wrote:

Oh, it's day all day in the daytime  
And there is no night in Creede.

Now, however, it was night there in the night-time, just as with any other peaceful, quiet town. Something stirred in my memory.

"Jack," I asked, "isn't this where Bob Ford came after he killed Jesse James? "

"Yeh," said my partner, then suddenly looked about him. "He's buried right over here."

So, in the moonlight, we went to Bob Ford's grave, set apart from the regular burying ground, merely a ramshackle oblong with high grown weeds, and the careening fence reeling drunkenly in the moonlight. Having prop-

erly worshipped at the shrine, as one would say, we dropped down into town by the simple expedient of wandering through the yards of unoccupied houses; and upon the main street, where once the throngs were so great that vehicles could not be used at night and the gamblers set up their games of chance in the open that the turned-away crowds from the regular emporiums might have a chance, we found three men under an arc light.

No, there was no place to eat in this town at 8:30 o'clock at night, this place where once it had been "day all day in the day time." But maybe Mrs. Zang would fix us something.

Mrs. Zang would, when at last we found her, in her white-painted cottage, a voluble little German woman who spoke with a bit of a whistle, and who informed us that she'd been the first white woman in the far-famed town of Creede. Naturally, with that grave in our memory, we asked her if she'd known Bob Ford.

"Ach!" she said, as she put the steak on the table and sat down beside us, "he was a nice gentleman. You know," she added innocently, "I slap him once!"

"Indeed?"

"Ach, yes! You see, it was like this — efery night there was shootings. And the crowds! They was eferywhere. So thick you couldn't push through them. Und one night, my husband und myself we was standing in the doorway of the hotel und this Bob Ford came along with a gun in his hand. Und he say yust like that, 'Where iss he, where iss he?' He was looking for somebody to shoot 'em, und then he saw my husband und he started to blame him for whoever it was getting away, und he started to hit him. Und I yust stepped forward und I slapped his

wrist down, und I said, 'Don't you dare do that!' Yust like that, I said it!

"Und, you know what?" she beamed. "He yust stepped back und took off his hat. 'My,' he said, 'you're a lady!' Und I told him, 'Yes, und my husband iss a gentleman und don't you dare do that!'"

"Well, you know, he apologized? Yes, indeed he did. But yust the same, I didn't trust him. Oo! He had a bad reputation around the town. So finally, he und my husband they went in the bar, und I went in the hotel and got the poker. Und then I hid in the doorway und yust stood there, looking at the part in his hair. 'If he hits my husband,' I said to myself, 'I'll hit him with this poker, right down that crease in his hair!' But you know, the first thing, they was laughing, und finally I went in there, und do you know, he was so nice!"

There you are. If that isn't enough, let Bob Ford's last minute in life be called to the stand. A month or so later, Lute Johnson, pioneer newspaperman of Colorado, and I were talking of Creede — and naturally, of Bob Ford.

"Funny thing about Bob," said Lute, who knew Creede when it was in its swaddling clothes, "he had a pretty big heart in him. You know, he'd been run out of Creede for some trouble there and gone over to Silverton. But he didn't like it, principally because his girl was still back in the other town. So he kept writing piteous letters that if they'd let him come back he'd be a good, law-abiding citizen, so finally they gave in. Well, Bob came back and opened up a dance hall, outside of town — or rather started to open it. Because when I met Bob Ford on the street that day, he was wearing a mournful expression and announced that his dance-hall project was all up in the air because his principal dancing girl had shown no

more consideration than to commit suicide. At least, that's what he'd heard and he wanted me to go with him and verify it.

"So we went up to the girl's room. Sure enough, there she was, deader 'n a doornail.

" 'Well, she's dead,' said Bob.

" 'She sure is,' I agreed.

" 'Guess I'll have to get her buried,' he decided, as he started back to the dance hall. That afternoon, he was standing by his bar, with a contribution list in his hand, collecting a dollar here and a dollar there to bury the dance-hall girl, and because he was so busy with that, he wasn't watching the door. The only time that I ever had known of Bob letting anybody come near him without surveying 'em first with his hand on his gun. But that girl's death seemed to be on his mind. He didn't even hear the sound of hoofbeats as a fellow named Kelley rode up and stuck his head in the door.

" 'Oh, Bob!' Kelley called. Bob Ford turned, and just as he did so, Kelley raised a shotgun and let him have it. Pretty near tore Bob's head off — caught him right in the neck with a full charge of shot — and Bob and the list to bury a dead dance-hall girl went to the floor together, while Kelley rode away to announce that he'd achieved his ambition; he'd killed the fellow who'd killed Jesse James."

"And what happened to Kelly?"

"Kelley? Oh, he got pardoned after a while, and then went down into Oklahoma. His reputation weighed on him pretty heavy though and he got to be a bit of a pest. So he was finally killed by a peace officer who then became known as the man who'd killed the man who'd killed the man who killed Jesse James."

Thus it goes; and it depends largely upon the viewpoint as to just what kind of persons these bad men really were, except of course, the fact that they were always good-hearted. Like Henry Starr, who was not only of a sweet disposition, but heroic as well. I've a bit of a personal interest in Henry Starr. His estate, if there is any such thing, owes me a derby hat and a pair of peg-leg pants — those wide ones, with a two-inch cuff. But then, on the other hand, it gave me an opportunity to see how a quiet, in-offensive bandit is looked upon in his own country, so perhaps that evens the score.

In case you don't know, Henry Starr stood pretty high in the batting average of outlaws. A sort of a perpetual bad man, as it were, having started back in the palmy days of Oklahoma banditry, along in the nineties, and kept right at his trade — except, of course, when he took a slight vacation in a cell block. A persistent bad man, with a good many years of knowing how — it was along about 1908 when he crossed my path, and by that time he'd earned for himself the reputation of being the champion, free-for-all, single-handed, lone-wolf bandit then out of captivity. Just to show how good he was, he had walked into Coffeyville, Kansas, where years before the Dalton boys had gotten themselves thoroughly shot up, and with one free-hand swoop, had held up a bank.

Nineteen hundred and eight was getting a bit late for bad men. So numerous posses started forth, included in one of which was an energetic reporter with that aforementioned derby. We had an inside tip, together with Winchesters, six-guns, shotguns and other impediments. With great caution and much scouting, we headed forth to Wolf Creek. We took our positions. There in the valley, two hundred and fifty yards away, was a little cabin,

and just as our informant had told us, a dead horse lying at one side, while within were Henry Starr and some companions, all dead drunk, as a result of a spree following the robbery.

Capturing bandits is a particular business. After I'd been yanked from behind the sheltering barricade of a six-inch black-jack oak and the sheriff had cursed the day that he'd ever been forced to bring a blankety-blanked-blue-black-blankety-blanked reporter on a dangerous expedition like this, and every man of the posse was flat on his stomach behind a rise in the hill, we got our instructions — to start shooting and keep on shooting until we'd riddled that house with bullets and killed everybody in it. Then he gave the order to fire.

All of us had nerves like steel. We did wonderful shooting. We hit the horse, and the chicken house, and the ground ten feet from the house; we knocked off the tin chimney, and punctured the well bucket. Now and then we accidentally hit the cabin and when the windows had finally been splintered by bullets, the sheriff ordered a pause so that Henry Starr, who certainly should be awake by this time, could come out and do a little shooting himself.

But no Henry Starr. No spurt of fire from behind the concealment of that blank-faced cabin. Only the dead horse, well punctured now by bullets. So the sheriff turned us loose again and for a half hour or so, we consumed cartridges right merrily. Following which there was a conference and the decision that by this time Henry Starr was thoroughly dead. Then it was decided to draw straws to determine who should ride down to the cabin and see how dead he was.

Having an article to do for my paper, I naturally ig-

nored this proceeding, in spite of the fact that I was invited, even urged by the sheriff to take part. Finally the matter was adjusted and a lank Oklahoman, riding loose, slumped over the hill, while a dozen rifles, all held true as steel, covered the cabin — in fact, covered everything for a radius of some two hundred yards, while the volunteer gazed at those gun barrels rather remorsefully; like one certain that if he didn't get shot from in front, he was sure to get it from behind. But on he went — half-way, three-quarters — all the way, without an interruption. He dismounted and walked into the cabin. He walked out again. He rode loosely back to the posse.

"Only one trouble," he said, "there ain't nobody there! "

After that, the posse went back to town, where it learned that Henry Starr, humorist that he was, had himself sent forth the report of his presence in that cabin, and then, to make the joke good, had held up another posse, hamstrung its horses, taken its guns and made the members walk back to town.

It was enough to anger anybody, and the posses started out with new vigor, only to learn that Henry Starr wasn't a bandit at all. Once back in the hills, where Henry Starr was really known, they began to find out his real, his magnanimous nature. Here was a child to whom he had given five dollars. Here a family that he'd helped with its scraggly crop. Here a man who would sit for hours, telling what a fine fellow Henry Starr was and how kind he was to his wife. Information? It was the last thing in the world that a posse could get; there were a hundred nooks and corners in which he might hide. Because Henry Starr — when he wasn't robbing banks, of course — certainly was a fine fellow, and it was too bad that he had

to do such things to make a living. Two weeks later, bedraggled and saddle-worn, I roamed into Panhuska and got into a game of pool with a blanket Indian. After he'd won \$6.50 and the game was over, he asked me where I'd been.

"Chasing Henry Starr," I told him.

"Yeh!" and he grinned widely. "Henry Stahh! Him fine fella."

That isn't all. Henry showed the world how fine he was. In a penitentiary too. For one night, in Fort Smith, while Henry was serving one of his sentences for withdrawing deposits from banks, Cherokee Bill, another prisoner, obtained a gun and proceeded to use it. Over the dead and wounded leaped Henry Starr, prisoner. He forced his way into the cell of Cherokee Bill and quarter-breed against half-breed, the battle was on — a battle that was not concluded until Henry Starr had wrenched the gun from the other prisoner's hand and submitted him to recapture by the prison authorities.

The old streak of goodness had come out at last. Henry Starr was a hero. He was promptly pardoned, and as promptly told the world that henceforth he would lead an upright life, that banditry did not pay and that, in those days in the penitentiary, he had learned the folly of being a bad man, anyway. There was something in his nature, he said, that had always called him to the side of the righteous and the good, and henceforth he was going to obey it.

So he went out and got himself killed while holding up another bank!

But even a bad man can sometimes go too far. There was Texas Charlie, for instance, who held forth in the old days over by Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado, and

who didn't know when to stop. After he'd done considerable shooting, the populace began to think that maybe it wasn't right. So they sent the sheriff up to a sawmill in the mountains where Charlie was working, and the sheriff handed him a warrant. Texas Charlie read it with a due spirit of humility. Then he handed it back to the sheriff and at the same time stuck a revolver in the officer's chest.

"Eat that!" he commanded. "Every bit of it!"

There wasn't anything else for the sheriff to do, so he ate the warrant and went back to town, and Texas Charlie went on working at the sawmill. Then he came into town and did more shooting — and went back to the sawmill. But the end was bound to come. Texas Charlie simply had too great a sense of humor.

One day he was walking along the planked sidewalks of the little town. Before him was a prominent citizen, whose legs were described as being utterly incapable of stopping a pig in the alley. It was too much for Texas Charlie. He drew his gun and amused himself for the next block by sending bullets between those bowed legs, and yowling with delight as they kicked up the splinters in the sidewalk. That was too much.

So a short time later, Texas Charlie was inveigled into town. As he walked down the street, windows opened on every side. From every window was poked a gun. When the smoke had cleared away, the coroner's jury debated seriously, and finally reported that after due deliberation it had found that the deceased had come to his death from gunshot wounds at the hand of a person or persons unknown. From which it might be inferred that the jury had a sense of humor itself.

In fact, a sense of humor is sometimes necessary when one reads the glamorous things which thirty or forty years

attach to various persons connected with the West. Not so long ago I was attracted by the cover of a dime novel. I read it excitedly — for here were facts that I'd never known; the description of a gun battle in which Major G. W. Lillie (Pawnee Bill) had gotten his man and in which Buffalo Bill turned thundering from the bar in the wild days of Salina and promptly shot the daylights out of a thug who was about to end his life. The only trouble being that Pawnee Bill is a placid, quiet man who spends his life counting bonds down in Oklahoma, or visiting the various circuses — he was a showman for years — who never had a bad-man gun fight and who got his name because he had been a teacher in the Pawnee Indian School. While Buffalo Bill was also of a quiet school in many ways.

Back in the days when I was Colonel Cody's press agent, we were accustomed to ride often in the afternoon following the *matinée*, in his spider trap. A tired man, a lonely man, financially embarrassed by his generosity and his blind belief in any one who happened to come to him with any sort of a plausible scheme, from gold mines to irrigation projects. A man beset by debts, by creditors bounding the ticket wagon on pay day, that they might seize a portion of his salary before he himself could lay his hands on it. A man who felt keenly the reverses which had come to him; he was at the low ebb of his estate of showmanship; oftentimes a circus can be cruel in its feverish desire to give the public exactly what the public wants. Buffalo Bill had been making his daily appearance for years. The public had seen him time and time again, and no matter how grateful that public may have been to him for his work in the building of the West — a gratitude becoming more pronounced as the years roll by — the

American show-going populace goes to an entertainment to be amused and to see new things. The result was that Colonel Cody had ceased to be the tremendous drawing card which once he had been, and there were those around the show lot who were unkind enough to remind him of the fact. A thing which hurt — hurt deeply. But it couldn't kill his sense of humor.

Incidentally, it was that amiability in the old days which kept Colonel Cody out of the ranks of the gunmen, no matter what dime novels and builders of fairy stories regarding the past may have to say about it. For the "Old Man", as we knew him, to my knowledge, never had a gun fight — in the real sense of the word. He scouted, rode pony express, fought Indians, guided expeditions, and killed buffalo, but he didn't engage in saloon brawls.

"It wasn't necessary," he often told me. "Those fellows mostly fought among themselves. Besides, when somebody was spoiling for a fight, he usually had to have somebody else to fight with. So all that a fellow had to do was to keep his temper and not give cause for a quarrel, and laugh off trouble, and he generally came out of trouble all right — unless, of course, he'd run out to see what was happening every time a gun popped, and got shot as an innocent bystander."

And according to his friends of the old days, Mike Russell, General Frank Baldwin and others, it was Cody's laugh which kept him out of trouble more than once. An infectious laugh, a booming laugh — with a twinkling of the eyes which made it sincere. Or a laugh which shook his frame without ever passing his lips.

Such as one night in Houston, when, after a long ride, we went to a hotel for dinner. The dining room was



BUFFALO BILL AND TWO OF HIS OLD FRIENDS  
AT WOUNDED KNEE BATTLEFIELD



EASTERNS HAVE THEIR PICTURES TAKEN  
IN CHAPS, JUST LIKE THE COWBOYS



crowded, and as the Colonel entered, there began a pattering of handclapping as he was recognized, rising to a thunder of applause. Buffalo Bill grinned and turned to me.

"Who's that for, Badlands," he asked, "you or me?"

"Can't prove it by me," I joked; "let's both take the bow."

So side by side, we went down the long row of tables, the Colonel bowing on his side, I bowing gravely on mine. At last we passed a table where sat The Lady Who Knows Everything.

"That bald-headed young man," she said to her companions, "is Buffalo Bill's son!"

Then it was that the laughter surged in the "Old Man", raising his shoulders in a series of inner convulsions — but the face remained grave.

"Anyway," he said *sotto voce*, as we went on, "you're my 'right bower.'"

And this for Buffalo Bill — he was one of the few old-time "professional Westerners" whom I ever met, who couldn't be "kidded" into really believing he had actually done the thousand and one things with which imaginative chroniclers of the West accredited him. Time after time, in the years in which I was closely associated with him, I would recall various wild and thrilling things which I had read of him in childhood days — and ask for the story from his own lips. If it were a true happening, such as the killing of Yellowhand, or the rescue at the Battle of the Warbonnet, or any of the other affairs of the West in which he had truly participated, Colonel Cody would tell the story as he remembered it, enthusiastically, and with all the necessary trimmings to make it

a good thrilling tale. But if it had not been an actual occurrence, there would be merely a flip of the reins, a clucking to his Arabian horses and then a chuckle, followed by:

"Oh, that was just one of Ned Buntline's lies. You see, after I began to get a pretty good reputation as an Injun fighter, Ned Buntline — he was a famous writer then — came out to see me and told me he wanted to write a lot of stories about me for a New York paper. Well, it was all right with me, and so he just started writing. And some of the things he wrote! "

And far be it from me to be prejudiced — but I've met a few other "Injun fighters" in my day who not only would admit to any heroic deed that anybody's imagination could fasten on to them, but spent a good deal of their time inventing others — just to keep their reputation in form. Strange enough, a great many of these were men who threw mental convulsions at the name of Buffalo Bill, then spent the rest of the evening in announcing him to be nothing but a white-haired old fraud, a four-flusher and a person who never did anything more for America than to shoot glass balls from the back of a horse in a Wild West show. The queer thing was that for some unaccountable reason, nine tenths of those defamers wore long hair, and a goatee and a certain type of big hat, and did their darndest to look like Buffalo Bill. Perhaps that's why the Colonel's sense of humor rose so easily when they would assail him.

For if there was any doubt about Buffalo Bill's prowess, one needed but to go to the one place where that prowess could be established — to the Indians themselves. To them "Pahaska" — the Long-Haired Man — was little less than a god. And a good thing for a bunch of motion-

picture men, soldiers, press agents, spectators, and Indians themselves, that he was!

It was back in 1913, and Buffalo Bill went on his picture venture in South Dakota — a venture which concerned the filming of his various adventures upon the very ground where a number of them had happened. Among them was the Battle of Wounded Knee upon Wounded Knee Battlefield, with as many of the survivors, both white and Indian, as could be procured. The preparations were made. Colonel Cody went to Washington and came back with an order for the Twelfth United States Cavalry to proceed to Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, as well as permission to use as many Ogallala and Brule Sioux Indians as would answer his call. So he sent forth word into the vast stretches of the Reservation that Pahaska needed his old enemies.

They came by wagon. They came in rickety cars, running as stages. They came by trail, on horseback and on foot; Woman Dress, who had saved the life of General Sheridan, Old Flatiron, then more than a hundred years old, No Neck and Ben American Horse, and the descendants of Rain in the Face. Even Short Bull, who is blamed in history for the last Sioux Rebellion and the Battle of Wounded Knee, was there, weeping in quite un-Indian fashion in his tepee, while his squaw moaned a doleful accompaniment as he told the story of an ancient piece of Indian politics and announced that it was all a put-up job and that a bunch of Indian bosses had "framed him"; that he had wanted the Indians to live in peace with the whites, but that the wily chieftains who had used him for a pawn had garbled his message and caused a war. Squaws were there by the scores, many of them with

worn moccasins, resultant from a foot-journey of often as high as fifty miles, that their papooses might shake the hand of Pahaska, their enemy and their friend. All along Wounded Knee Creek where in years gone by the United States soldiers had slaughtered the members of Big Foot's band of Indian warriors, the tepees were pitched; often upon the same spot where the tepees of those same Indians had been placed on the day of the actual battle. At night, a full moon shone through the October haze upon vaguely moving forms, while the tom-toms beat in slow precision as blanketed, bef feathered Sioux went through the figures of their death dances — in mourning for those who lay buried in the trench at the top of the hill. And for those who didn't care for that amusement, an enterprising merry-go-round owner had carted his carousel forty miles overland upon wagons and set it up within hailing distance of the burying ground, while stolid Indian bucks and grinning squaws rode and rode and rode to the accompaniment of the squealing organ, and the camp crier added to the general din by his ceaseless announcements — in Sioux, of course — to which nobody seemed to pay any attention.

But with all the excitement, there was an undercurrent of the latent savagery of the Sioux. Old memories had been revived. Ancient bucks who had been in that battle gathered about them younger braves and told of what had been to them a wanton massacre. There were wailings within the tepees. And then —

It was the night before the "battle" that we heard it. Buffalo Bill and the army generals who had come from various parts of the United States to participate — even General Nelson A. Miles was there — were twenty miles away at the Pine Ridge Agency. The camp was sleeping.

Then, to Johnny Baker, Buffalo Bill's foster son, Ted Wharton, the motion-picture director and myself, came a bit of exciting news. Some enterprising young buck had gotten a great idea. On the morrow would be that motion-picture battle, with eight hundred Sioux Indians on one side and a regiment of United States Cavalry, dressed in the old-fashioned blues, on the other. And wouldn't it be a fine revenge for the Battle of Wounded Knee if the Sioux used real cartridges instead of blanks!

After our teeth had ceased chattering, we raced for a little white Indian schoolhouse a mile or so away. A telephone was there, and over the static-filled line we told "The Old Man." A grumble from the other end of the wire. Then:

"Guess I'd better come out."

Out he came, a square-shouldered, towering figure in the moonlight. He shouted for Woman Dress, for Flat-iron, for No Neck and his scouts and enemies of other days. They all went into a tepee. Now and then Buffalo Bill's voice boomed over the guttural tones of the Indians. Then the chieftains came forth to summon lesser chiefs and to give their commands. Immediately there leaped into action an espionage system that was almost unbelievable in its swiftness and surety. An hour passed and with it the announcement that the culprit had been found, shown the error of his ways, the baby plot frustrated and all was safe. The next day the battle was held — but only blanks were used.

All of which, naturally, is beside the point of the gentleness of bad men, except as regards the license which has been taken with the activities of any one widely known in the Old West — that and the justification which always existed.

Some years ago, in Colorado, there was a bit of a character in the person of Henry Lehman, who lived on the South Fork of the Grand River in what is known as Middle Park. When Henry, for instance, went to his corral one evening and found a bear eating a calf, he didn't return to the house for his gun. He merely cut a club of quaking asp and then, when the bear attempted to crawl over the corral fence in an effort at escape, beat it to death. And with this disposition, Henry Lehman walked into Central City one afternoon in the roaring, blustery days of the nineties, and turned inquiringly to a group as he noticed a man walking down the middle of the street and at the same time reloading a six-shooter.

"Something happened?" he asked.

"Yeh," the awed group was in a doorway. "He's just shot some people."

"What for?"

"Why, he owed a doctor bill and the doctor turned it over to some lawyers. They garnisheed this fellow's wages and that made him mad. So he shot one of the lawyers and the marshal and a fellow who happened to be coming in the building."

"Humph!" Lehman eyed the man, still walking unmolested down the center of the street, at last to reach a wagon, climb into it and drive out of town. "Seems to me something ought to be done about it."

The group in the doorway agreed that something certainly ought to be done. But nothing continued to be done. At last:

"Why doesn't somebody go after him?"

That brought the matter to an exact point, so the question was answered.

"Well, you see, he's a crack shot and everybody

figures that it might be a trifle dangerous. Now, of course, if a good man with a gun like you 'd go after him —— ”

Lehman thought that over. Going after a murderer in those days, it seemed, was an affair for calm deliberation. Finally:

“ Well, I guess I could spare the time. Except I haven't got any authority.”

That was another question to dispose of, so everybody thought that over. Then the sheriff was consulted. Yes, he'd give Lehman the authority. Whereupon Henry became a deputy.

“ Now, if I had a gun,” he said.

So they thought that over too. At last the matter was decided, and they went to a clothing store where rested the kind of a rifle that Lehman liked best. Henry sighted it carefully.

“ Guess it'll do,” he said. “ Where's the cartridges.”

Well, now, that was something that the clothing-store man hadn't thought about. He wasn't quite sure that he had any cartridges. But he'd look around. So the search went on, in boxes, in drawers and under the counter.

“ How many would you need? ” came at last.

“ Oh, one or two.”

“ Well, there ain't any more than that,” and the supply was handed forth. To be followed by a new difficulty — a method of pursuit, which was finally decided by volunteers with a wagon. Out of town they went, the wagon, the volunteer drivers and Henry Lehman, with his borrowed rifle and his two cartridges. At last to overtake the murderer and to shout:

“ Throw up those hands! ”

There was only the reply of a swiftly turning figure, a raised arm, the smoke of a revolver shot — mingled

with the cracking of Henry Lehman's rifle, as the murderer fell dead, thus ending the problem of what should be done about the shooting of three people.

"But do you know," said Jack Nankervis, as he told me the story one night in camp, "there was some mighty hard feelings toward Henry over that. A lot of people in Central figured that any man who'd garnishee a fellow's wages ought to get shot! "

THE END





Mr. Cooper knows the high Rockies, not only as a sportsman who searches out the best trout pool or the covert where wild game may be found, but as a lover of the wilderness who seeks the solitude and the heights for their own sakes. He knows the passes and trails, the deserted towns where once the miners thronged by hundreds, and the occasional shack where lives the solitary prospector still lured by the hope of "striking it rich." Year by year the author has watched the vacationists encroaching upon the wilderness he loves, old-time mule trails becoming well-graded motor roads, fish and game decreasing before the onslaughts of pleasure seekers. Since motor and camping parties have become a permanent part of his beloved playground, he includes much good advice as to the best methods of such travel and camping.

The high country itself, well up above the timber line, will probably always be a safe refuge to those who, like Mr. Cooper, love Nature in her wilder moods, but the lesser slopes as well are delightfully described and pictured, with many an anecdote and tale of human interest. The result is an interesting and well-rounded book on the Rockies as they were and as they now are.



